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A Controversy

BETWEEN

HERBERT SPENCER AND FREDERIC HARRISON.

FROM THE "NINETEENTH CENTURY" AND
"PALL MALL GAZETTE," WITH
COMMENTS BY

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CONTENTS.

RELIGION:

A RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.[1]

UNLIKE the ordinary consciousness, the religious consciousness is concerned with that which lies beyond the sphere of sense. A brute thinks only of things which can be touched, seen, heard, tasted, etc.; and the like is true of the untaught child, the deaf-mute, and the lowest savage. But the developing man has thoughts about existences which he regards as usually intangible, inaudible, invisible; and yet which he regards as operative upon him. What suggests this notion of agencies transcending perception? How do these ideas concerning the supernatural evolve out of ideas concerning the natural? The transition cannot be sudden; and an account of the genesis of religion must begin by describing the steps through which the transition takes place.

The ghost-theory exhibits these steps quite clearly. We are shown by it that the mental differentiation of

[1] The statements concerning matters of fact in the first part of this article are based on the contents of Part I. of *The Principles of Sociology*.

invisible and intangible beings from visible and tangible beings progresses slowly and unobtrusively. In the fact that the other-self, supposed to wander in dreams, is believed to have actually done and seen whatever was dreamed — in the fact that the other-self when going away at death, but expected presently to return, is conceived as a double equally material with the original; we see that the supernatural agent in its primitive form diverges very little from the natural agent — is simply the original man with some added powers of going about secretly and doing good or evil. And the fact that when the double of the dead man ceases to be dreamed about by those who knew him, his non-appearance in dreams is held to imply that he is finally dead, shows that these earliest supernatural agents are conceived as having but a temporary existence: the first tendencies to a permanent consciousness of the supernatural prove abortive.

In many cases no higher degree of differentiation is reached. The ghost-population, recruited by deaths on the one side, but on the other side losing its members as they cease to be recollected and dreamed about, does not increase; and no individuals included in it come to be recognized through successive generations as established supernatural powers. Thus the Unkulunkulu, or old-old one, of the Zulus, the father of the race, is regarded as finally or completely dead; and there is propitiation only of ghosts of more recent date. But where circumstances favor the continuance of sacrifices at graves,

witnessed by members of each new generation, who are told about the dead and transmit the tradition, there eventually arises the conception of a permanently-existing ghost or spirit. A more marked contrast in thought between supernatural beings and natural beings is thus established. There simultaneously results a great increase in the number of these supposed supernatural beings, since the aggregate of them is now continually added to; and there is a strengthening tendency to think of them as everywhere around, and as causing all unusual occurrences.

Differences among the ascribed powers of ghosts soon arise. They naturally follow the observed differences among the powers of living individuals. Hence it results that while the propitiations of ordinary ghosts are made only by their descendants, it comes occasionally to be thought prudent to propitiate also the ghosts of the more dreaded individuals, even though they have no claims of blood. Quite early there thus begin those grades of supernatural beings which eventually become so strongly marked.

Habitual wars, which more than all other causes initiate these first differentiations, go on to initiate further and more decided ones. For with those compoundings of small societies into greater ones, and re-compounding of these into still greater, which war effects, there, of course, with the multiplying gradations of power among living men, arises the conception of multiplying gradations of power among their ghosts. Thus in course of time are formed the conceptions of the great ghosts or gods, the more

numerous secondary ghosts or demi-gods, and so on downwards — a pantheon: there being still, however, no essential distinction of kind; as we see in the calling of ordinary ghosts *manes*-gods by the Romans and *elohim* by the Hebrews. Moreover, repeating as the other life in the other world does the life in this world, in its needs, occupations, and social organization, there arises not only a differentiation of grades among supernatural beings in respect of their powers, but also in respect of their characters and kinds of activity. There come to be local gods, and gods reigning over this or that order of phenomena; there come to be good and evil spirits of various qualities; and where there has been by conquest a superposing of societies one upon another, each having its own system of ghost-derived beliefs, there results an involved combination of such beliefs, constituting a mythology.

Of course ghosts primarily being doubles like the originals in all things; and gods (when not the living members of a conquering race) being doubles of the more powerful men; it results that they, too, are originally no less human than other ghosts in their physical characters, their passions, and their intelligences. Like the doubles of the ordinary dead, they are supposed to consume the flesh, blood, bread, wine, given to them: at first literally, and later in a more spiritual way by consuming the essences of them. They not only appear as visible and tangible persons, but they enter into conflicts with men, are wounded, suffer pain: the sole distinction being that they have miraculous powers of healing and consequent immor-

tality. Here, indeed, there needs a qualification; for not only do various peoples hold that the gods die a first death (as naturally happens where they are members of a conquering race, called gods because of their superiority), but, as in the case of Pan, it is supposed, even among the cultured, that there is a second and final death of a god, like that second and final death of a man supposed among existing savages. With advancing civilization the divergence of the supernatural being from the natural being becomes more decided. There is nothing to check the gradual de-materialization of the ghost and of the god; and this de-materialization is insensibly furthered in the effort to reach consistent ideas of supernatural action: the god ceases to be tangible, and later he ceases to be visible or audible. Along with this differentiation of physical attributes from those of humanity, there goes on more slowly the differentiation of mental attributes. The god of the savage, represented as having intelligence scarcely, if at all, greater than that of the living man, is deluded with ease. Even the gods of the semi-civilized are deceived, make mistakes, repent of their plans; and only in course of time does there arise the conception of unlimited vision and universal knowledge. The emotional nature simultaneously undergoes a parallel transformation. The grosser passions, originally conspicuous and carefully ministered to by devotees, gradually fade, leaving only the passions less related to corporeal satisfactions; and eventually these, too, become partially de-humanized.

These ascribed characters of deities are continually adapted and re-adapted to the needs of the social state. During the militant phase of activity, the chief god is conceived as holding insubordination the greatest crime, as implacable in anger, as merciless in punishment; and any alleged attributes of a milder kind occupy but small space in the social consciousness. But where militancy declines and the harsh, despotic form of government appropriate to it is gradually qualified by the form appropriate to industrialism, the foreground of the religious consciousness is increasingly filled with those ascribed traits of the divine nature which are congruous with the ethics of peace; divine love, divine forgiveness, divine mercy, are now the characteristics enlarged upon.

To perceive clearly the effects of mental progress and changing social life thus stated in the abstract, we must glance at them in the concrete. If, without foregone conclusions, we contemplate the traditions, records, and monuments of the Egyptians, we see that out of their primitive ideas of gods, brute or human, there were evolved spiritualized ideas of gods, and finally of a god; until the priesthoods of later times, repudiating the earlier ideas, described them as corruptions: being swayed by the universal tendency to regard the first state as the highest — a tendency traceable down to the theories of existing theologians and mythologists. Again, if, putting aside speculations, and not asking what historical value the *Iliad* may have, we take it simply as indicating the early Greek notion of Zeus, and compare

this with the notion contained in the Platonic dialogues; we see that Greek civilization had greatly modified (in the better minds, at least) the purely anthropomorphic conception of him: the lower human attributes being dropped and the higher ones transfigured. Similarly, if we contrast the Hebrew God described in primitive traditions, manlike in appearance, appetites, and emotions, with the Hebrew God as characterized by the prophets, there is shown a widening range of power along with a nature increasingly remote from that of man. And on passing to the conceptions of him which are now entertained, we are made aware of an extreme transfiguration. By a convenient obliviousness, a deity who in early times is represented as hardening men's hearts so that they may commit punishable acts, and as employing a lying spirit to deceive them, comes to be mostly thought of as an embodiment of virtues transcending the highest we can imagine.

Thus, recognizing the fact that in the primitive human mind there exists neither religious idea nor religious sentiment, we find that in the course of social evolution and the evolution of intelligence accompanying it, there are generated both the ideas and sentiments which we distinguish as religious; and that through a process of causation clearly traceable, they traverse those stages which have brought them, among civilized races, to their present forms.

And now what may we infer will be the evolution of religious ideas and sentiments throughout the

future? On the one hand it is irrational to suppose that the changes which have brought the religious consciousness to its present form will suddenly cease. On the other hand, it is irrational to suppose that the religious consciousness, naturally generated as we have seen, will disappear and leave an unfilled gap. Manifestly it must undergo further changes; and however much changed it must continue to exist. What then are the transformations to be expected? If we reduce the process above delineated to its lowest terms, we shall see our way to an answer.

As pointed out in *First Principles*, § 96, Evolution is throughout its course habitually modified by that Dissolution which eventually undoes it: the changes which become manifest being usually but the differential results of opposing tendencies towards integration and disintegration. Rightly to understand the genesis and decay of religious systems, and the probable future of those now existing, we must take this truth into account. During those earlier changes by which there is created a hierarchy of gods, demi-gods, manes-gods, and spirits of various kinds and ranks, evolution goes on with but little qualification. The consolidated mythology produced, while growing in the mass of supernatural beings composing it, assumes increased heterogeneity along with increased definiteness in the arrangement of its parts and the attributes of its members. But the antagonist Dissolution eventually gains predominance. The spreading recognition of natural causation conflicts with

this mythological evolution, and insensibly weakens those of its beliefs which are most at variance with advancing knowledge. Demons and the secondary divinities presiding over divisions of Nature become less thought of as the phenomena ascribed to them are more commonly observed to follow a constant order; and hence these minor components of the mythology slowly dissolve away. At the same time, with growing supremacy of the great god heading the hierarchy, there goes increasing ascription to him of actions which were before distributed among numerous supernatural beings: there is integration of power. While in proportion as there arises the consequent conception of an omnipotent and omnipresent deity, there is a gradual fading of his alleged human attributes: dissolution begins to affect the supreme personality in respect of ascribed form and nature.

Already, as we have seen, this process has in the more advanced societies, and especially among their higher members, gone to the extent of merging all minor supernatural powers in one supernatural power; and already this one supernatural power has, by what Mr. Fiske aptly calls de-anthropomorphization, lost the grosser attributes of humanity. If things hereafter are to follow the same general course as heretofore, we must infer that this dropping of human attributes will continue. Let us ask what positive changes are hence to be expected.

Two factors must unite in producing them. There is the development of those higher sentiments which

no longer tolerate the ascription of inferior sentiments to a divinity; and there is the intellectual development which causes dissatisfaction with the crude interpretations previously accepted. Of course in pointing out the effects of these factors, I must name some which are familiar: but it is needful to glance at them along with others.

The cruelty of a Fijian god who, represented as devouring the souls of the dead, may be supposed to inflict torture during the process, is small compared with the cruelty of a god who condemns men to tortures which are eternal; and the ascription of this cruelty, though habitual in ecclesiastical formulas, occasionally occurring in sermons, and still sometimes pictorially illustrated, is becoming so intolerable to the better-natured, that while some theologians distinctly deny it, others quietly drop it out of their teachings. Clearly, this change cannot cease until the beliefs in hell and damnation disappear.[1] Disappearance of them will be aided by an increasing repugnance to injustice. The visiting on Adam's descendants through hundreds of generations dreadful penalties for a small transgression which they did not commit; the damning of all men who do not avail themselves of an alleged mode of obtaining forgiveness, which most men have never heard of; and

[1] To meet a possible criticism, it may be well to remark that whatever force they may have against deists (and they have very little), Butler's arguments concerning these and allied beliefs do not tell at all against agnostics.

the effecting a reconciliation by sacrificing a son who was perfectly innocent, to satisfy the assumed necessity for a propitiatory victim; are modes of action which, ascribed to a human ruler, would call forth expressions of abhorrence; and the ascription of them to the Ultimate Cause of things, even now felt to be full of difficulties, must become impossible. So, too, must die out the belief that a Power present in innumerable worlds throughout infinite space, and who during millions of years of the Earth's earlier existence needed no honoring by its inhabitants, should be seized with a craving for praise; and having created mankind, should be angry with them if they do not perpetually tell him how great he is. As fast as men escape from that glamour of early impressions which prevents them from thinking, they will refuse to imply a trait of character which is the reverse of worshipful.

Similarly with the logical incongruities more and more conspicuous to growing intelligence. Passing over the familiar difficulties that sundry of the implied divine traits are in contradiction with the divine attributes otherwise ascribed — that a god who repents of what he has done must be lacking either in power or in foresight; that his anger presupposes an occurrence which has been contrary to intention, and so indicates defect of means; we come to the deeper difficulty that such emotions, in common with all emotions, can exist only in a consciousness which is limited. Every emotion has its antecedent ideas, and antecedent ideas are habitually supposed to occur

in God: he is represented as seeing and hearing this or the other, and as being emotionally affected thereby. That is to say, the conception of a divinity possessing these traits of character, necessarily continues anthropomorphic; not only in the sense that the emotions ascribed are like those of human beings, but also in the sense that they form parts of a consciousness which, like the human consciousness, is formed of successive states. And such a conception of the divine consciousness is irreconcilable both with the unchangeableness otherwise alleged, and with the omniscience otherwise alleged. For a consciousness constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences, cannot be simultaneously occupied with all objects and all occurrences throughout the universe. To believe in a divine consciousness, men must refrain from thinking what is meant by consciousness — must stop short with verbal propositions; and propositions which they are debarred from rendering into thoughts will more and more fail to satisfy them. Of course like difficulties present themselves when the will of God is spoken of. So long as we refrain from giving a definite meaning to the word will, we may say that it is possessed by the Cause of All Things, as readily as we may say that love of approbation is possessed by a circle; but when from the words we pass to the thoughts they stand for, we find that we can no more unite in consciousness the terms of the one proposition than we can those of the other. Whoever conceives any other will than his own must do so in terms of his own

will, which is the sole will directly known to him — all other wills being only inferred. But will, as each is conscious of it, presupposes a motive — a prompting desire of some kind: absolute indifference excludes the conception of will. Moreover will, as implying a prompting desire, connotes some end contemplated as one to be achieved, and ceases with the achievement of it; some other will, referring to some other end, taking its place. That is to say, will, like emotion, necessarily supposes a series of states of consciousness. The conception of a divine will, derived from that of the human will, involves, like it, localization in space and time; the willing of each end, excluding from consciousness for an interval the willing of other ends, and therefore being inconsistent with that omnipresent activity which simultaneously works out an infinity of ends. It is the same with the ascription of intelligence. Not to dwell on the seriality and limitation implied as before, we may note that intelligence, as alone conceivable by us, presupposes existences independent of it and objective to it. It is carried on in terms of changes primarily wrought by alien activities — the impressions generated by things beyond consciousness, and the ideas derived from such impressions. To speak of an intelligence which exists in the absence of all such alien activities, is to use a meaningless word. If to the corollary that the First Cause, considered as intelligent, must be continually affected by independent objective activities, it is replied that these have become such by act of creation, and were

previously included in the First Cause; then the reply is that in such case the First Cause could before this creation, have had nothing to generate in it such changes as those constituting what we call intelligence, and must therefore have been unintelligent at the time when intelligence was most called for. Hence it is clear that the intelligence ascribed, answers in no respect to that which we know by the name. It is intelligence out of which all the characters constituting it have vanished.

These and other difficulties, some of which are often discussed but never disposed of, must force men hereafter to drop the higher anthropomorphic characters given to the First Cause, as they have long since dropped the lower. The conception which has been enlarging from the beginning must go on enlarging, until by disappearance of its limits, it becomes a consciousness which transcends the forms of distinct thought, though it for ever remains a consciousness.

'But how can such a final consciousness of the Unknowable, thus tacitly alleged to be true, be reached by successive modifications of a conception which was utterly untrue? The ghost-theory of the savage is baseless. The material double of a dead man in which he believes, never had any existence. And if by gradual de-materialization of this double was produced the conception of the supernatural agent in general — if the conception of a deity, formed by the dropping of some human attributes

and transfiguration of others, resulted from continuance of this process; is not the developed and purified conception reached by pushing the process to its limit, a fiction also? Surely if the primitive belief was absolutely false, all derived beliefs must be absolutely false.'

This objection looks fatal; and it would be fatal were its premises valid. Unexpected as it will be to most readers, the answer here to be made is that at the outset a germ of truth was contained in the primitive conception — the truth, namely, that the power which manifests itself in consciousness is but a differently conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness.

Every voluntary act yields to the primitive man a proof of a source of energy within him. Not that he thinks about his internal experiences; but in these experiences this notion lies latent. When producing motion in his limbs, and through them motion in other things, he is aware of the accompanying feeling of effort. And this sense of effort, which is the perceived antecedent of changes produced by him, becomes the conceived antecedent of changes not produced by him — furnishes him with a term of thought by which to represent the genesis of these objective changes. At first this idea of muscular force as anteceding unusual events around him, carries with it the whole assemblage of associated ideas. He thinks of the implied effort as an effort exercised by a being just like himself. In course of time these doubles of the dead, supposed to be workers of all but the most

familiar changes, are modified in conception. Besides becoming less grossly material, some of them are developed into larger personalities presiding over classes of phenomena which being comparatively regular in their order, suggest a belief in beings who, while more powerful than men, are less variable in their modes of action. So that the idea of force as exercised by such beings, comes to be less associated with the idea of a human ghost. Further advances, by which minor supernatural agents are merged in one general agent, and by which the personality of this general agent is rendered vague while becoming widely extended, tend still further to dissociate the notion of objective force from the force known as such in consciousness; and the dissociation reaches its extreme in the thoughts of the man of science, who interprets in terms of force not only the visible changes of sensible bodies, but all physical changes whatever, even up to the undulations of the ethereal medium. Nevertheless, this force (be it force under that statical form by which matter resists, or under that dynamical form distinguished by energy) is to the last thought of in terms of that internal energy which he is conscious of as muscular effort. He is compelled to symbolize objective force in terms of subjective force from lack of any other symbol.

See now the implications. That internal energy which in the experiences of the primitive man was always the immediate antecedent of changes wrought by him — that energy which, when interpreting external changes, he thought of along with those attri-

butes of a human personality connected with it in himself; is the same energy which, freed from anthropomorphic accompaniments, is now figured as the cause of all external phenomena. The last stage reached is recognition of the truth that force as it exists beyond consciousness, cannot be like what we know as force within consciousness; and that yet, as either is capable of generating the other, they must be different modes of the same. Consequently, the final outcome of that speculation commenced by the primitive man, is that the Power manifested throughout the Universe distinguished as material, is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness.

It is untrue, then, that the foregoing argument proposes to evolve a true belief from a belief that was wholly false. Contrariwise, the ultimate form of the religious consciousness is the final development of a consciousness which at the outset contained a germ of truth obscured by multitudinous errors.

Those who think that science is dissipating religious beliefs and sentiments, seem unaware that whatever of mystery is taken from the old interpretation is added to the new. Or rather, we may say that transference from the one to the other is accompanied by increase; since, for an explanation which has a seeming feasibility, science substitutes an explanation which, carrying us back only a certain distance, there leaves us in presence of the avowedly inexplicable.

Under one of its aspects scientific progress is a

gradual transfiguration of Nature. Where ordinary perception saw perfect simplicity it reveals great complexity; where there seemed absolute inertness it discloses intense activity; and in what appears mere vacancy it finds a marvellous play of forces. Each generation of physicists discovers in so-called 'brute matter' powers which, but a few years before, the most instructed physicist would have thought incredible; as instance the ability of a mere iron plate to take up the complicated aërial vibrations produced by articulate speech, which, translated into multitudinous and varied electric pulses, are re-translated a thousand miles off by another iron plate and again heard as articulate speech. When the explorer of Nature sees that, quiescent as they appear, surrounding solid bodies are thus sensitive to forces which are infinitesimal in their amounts — when the spectroscope proves to him that molecules on the Earth pulsate in harmony with molecules in the stars — when there is forced on him the inference that every point in space thrills with an infinity of vibrations passing through it in all directions; the conception to which he tends is much less that of a Universe of dead matter than that of a Universe everywhere alive: alive if not in the restricted sense, still in a general sense.

This transfiguration, which the inquiries of physicists continually increase, is aided by that other transfiguration resulting from metaphysical inquiries. Subjective analysis compels us to admit that our scientific interpretations of the phenomena which

objects present, are expressed in terms of our own variously-combined sensations and ideas — are expressed, that is, in elements belonging to consciousness, which are but symbols of the something beyond consciousness. Though analysis afterwards reinstates our primitive beliefs, to the extent of showing that behind every group of phenomenal manifestations there is always a *nexus*, which is the reality that remains fixed amid appearances which are variable; yet we are shown that this *nexus* of reality is forever inaccessible to consciousness. And when, once more, we remember that the activities constituting consciousness, being rigorously bounded, cannot bring in among themselves the activities beyond the bounds, which therefore seem unconscious, though production of either by the other seems to imply that they are of the same essential nature; this necessity we are under to think of the external energy in terms of the internal energy, gives rather a spiritualistic than a materialistic aspect to the Universe: further thought, however, obliging us to recognize the truth that a conception given in phenomenal manifestations of this ultimate energy can in no wise show us what it is.

While the beliefs to which analytic science thus leads are such as do not destroy the object-matter of religion, but simply transfigure it, science under its concrete forms enlarges the sphere for religious sentiment. From the very beginning the progress of knowledge has been accompanied by an increasing capacity for wonder. Among savages, the lowest are the least surprised when shown remarkable pro-

ducts of civilized art: astonishing the traveller by their indifference. And so little of the marvellous do they perceive in the grandest phenomena of Nature, that any inquiries concerning them they regard as childish trifling. This contrast in mental attitude between the lowest human beings and the highest human beings around us, is paralleled by the contrasts among the grades of these higher human beings themselves. It is not the rustic, nor the artisan, nor the trader, who sees something more than a mere matter of course in the hatching of a chick; but it is the biologist, who, pushing to the uttermost his analysis of vital phenomena, reaches his greatest perplexity when a speck of protoplasm under the microscope shows him life in its simplest form, and makes him feel that however he formulates its processes the actual play of forces remains unimaginable. Neither in the ordinary tourist nor in the deer-stalker climbing the mountains above him, does a highland glen rouse ideas beyond those of sport or of the picturesque; but it may, and often does, in the geologist. He, observing that the glacier-rounded rock he sits on has lost by weathering but half-an-inch of its surface since a time far more remote than the beginnings of human civilization, and then trying to conceive the slow denudation which has cut out the whole valley, has thoughts of time and of power to which they are strangers—thoughts which, already utterly inadequate to their objects, he feels to be still more futile on noting the contorted beds of gneiss around, which

tell him of a time, immeasurably more remote, when far beneath the Earth's surface they were in a half-melted state, and again tell him of a time, immensely exceeding this in remoteness, when their components were sand and mud on the shores of an ancient sea. Nor is it in the primitive peoples who suppose that the heavens rested on the mountain tops, any more than in the modern inheritors of their cosmogony who repeat that 'the heavens declare the glory of God,' that we find the largest conceptions of the Universe or the greatest amount of wonder excited by contemplation of it. Rather, it is in the astronomer, who sees in the Sun a mass so vast that even into one of his spots our Earth might be plunged without touching its edges; and who by every finer telescope is shown an increased multitude of such suns, many of them far larger.

Hereafter, as heretofore, higher faculty and deeper insight will raise rather than lower this sentiment. At present the most powerful and most instructed mind has neither the knowledge nor the capacity required for symbolizing in thought the totality of things. Occupied with one or other division of Nature, the man of science usually does not know enough of the other divisions even rudely to conceive the extent and complexity of their phenomena; and supposing him to have adequate knowledge of each, yet he is unable to think of them as a whole. Wider and stronger intellect may hereafter help him to form a vague consciousness of them in their totality. We may say that just as an undeveloped musical

faculty, able only to appreciate a simple melody, cannot grasp the variously-entangled passages and harmonies of a symphony, which in the minds of composer and conductor are unified into involved musical effects awakening far greater feeling than is possible to the musically uncultured; so, by future more evolved intelligences, the course of things now apprehensible only in parts may be apprehensible all together, with an accompanying feeling as much beyond that of the present cultured man, as his feeling is beyond that of the savage.

And this feeling is not likely to be decreased but to be increased by that analysis of knowledge which, while forcing him to agnosticism, yet continually prompts him to imagine some solution of the Great Enigma which he knows cannot be solved. Especially must this be so when he remembers that the very notions, beginning and end, cause and purpose, are relative notions belonging to human thought which are probably irrelevant to the Ultimate Reality transcending human thought; and when, though suspecting that explanation is a word without meaning when applied to this Ultimate Reality, he yet feels compelled to think there must be an explanation.

But amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.

HERBERT SPENCER.

THE GHOST OF RELIGION.

In the January number of this Review is to be found an article on Religion which has justly awakened a profound and sustained interest. The creed of Agnosticism was there formulated anew by the acknowledged head of the Evolution philosophy, with a definiteness such as perhaps it never wore before. To my mind there is nothing in the whole range of modern religious discussion more cogent and more suggestive than the array of conclusions the final outcome of which is marshalled in those twelve pages. It is the last word of the Agnostic philosophy in its long controversy with Theology. That word is decisive, and it is hard to conceive how Theology can rally for another bout from such a *sorites* of dilemma as is there presented. My own humble purpose is not to criticise this paper, but to point its practical moral, and, if I may, to add to it a rider of my own. As a summary of philosophical conclusions on the theological problem, it seems to me frankly unanswerable. Speaking generally, I shall now dispute no part of it but one word, and that is the title. It is entitled 'Religion.' To me it is

rather the Ghost of Religion. Religion as a living force lies in a different sphere.

The essay, which is packed with thought to a degree unusual even with Mr. Herbert Spencer, contains evidently three parts. The first (pp. 1–7) deals with the historical Evolution of Religion, of which Mr. Spencer traces the germs in the primitive belief in ghosts. The second (pp. 7–14) arrays the moral and intellectual dilemmas involved in all anthropomorphic theology into one long catena of difficulty, out of which it is hard to conceive any free mind emerging with success. The third part (pp. 14–22) deals with the evolution of Religion in the future, and formulates, more precisely than has ever yet been effected, the positive creed of Agnostic philosophy.

Has, then, the Agnostic a positive creed? It would seem so; for Mr. Spencer brings us at last 'to the one absolute certainty, the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.' But let no one suppose that this is merely a new name for the Great First Cause of so many theologies and metaphysics. In spite of the capital letters, and the use of theological terms as old as Isaiah or Athanasius, Mr. Spencer's Energy has no analogy with God. It is Eternal, Infinite, and Incomprehensible; but still it is not He, but It. It remains always Energy, Force, nothing anthropomorphic; such as electricity, or anything else that we might conceive as the ultimate basis of all the physical forces. None of the positive attributes which

have ever been predicated of God can be used of this Energy. Neither goodness, nor wisdom, nor justice, nor consciousness, nor will, nor life, can be ascribed, even by analogy, to this Force. Now a force to which we cannot apply the ideas of goodness, wisdom, justice, consciousness, or life, any more than we can to a circle, is certainly not God, has no analogy with God, nor even with what Pope has called the 'Great First Cause, least understood.' It shares some of the negative attributes of God and First Cause, but no positive one. It is, in fact, only the Unknowable a little more defined; though I do not remember that Mr. Spencer, or any evolution philosopher, has ever formulated the Unknowable in terms with so deep a theological ring as we hear in the phrase 'Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.'

The terms do seem, perhaps, rather needlessly big and absolute. And fully accepting Mr. Spencer's logical canons, one does not see why it should be called an 'absolute certainty.' 'Practical belief' satisfies me; and I doubt the legitimacy of substituting for it 'absolute certainty.' 'Infinite' and 'Eternal,' also, can mean to Mr. Spencer nothing more than 'to which we know no limits, no beginning or end,' and, for my part, I prefer to say this. Again, 'an Energy'—why AN Energy? The Unknowable may certainly consist of more than one energy. To assert the presence of one uniform energy is to profess to know something very important about the Unknowable: that it is homogeneous, and even iden-

tical, throughout the Universe. And then, 'from which all things proceed' is perhaps a rather equivocal reversion to the theologic type. In the Athanasian Creed the Third Person 'proceeds' from the First and Second. But this process has always been treated as a mystery; and it would be safer to avoid the phrases of mysticism. Let us keep the old words, for we all mean much the same thing; and I prefer to put it thus. All observation and meditation, Science and Philosophy, bring us 'to the *practical belief* that man is ever in the presence of *some energy or energies*, of which he knows nothing, and to which therefore he would be wise to assign no limits, conditions, or functions.' This is, doubtless, what Mr. Spencer himself means. For my part, I prefer his old term, the Unknowable. Though I have always thought that it would be more philosophical not to assert of the Unknown that it is Unknowable. And, indeed, I would rather not use the capital letter, but stick literally to our evidence, and say frankly 'the unknown.'

Thus viewed, the attempt, so to speak, to put a little unction into the Unknowable is hardly worth the philosophical inaccuracy it involves; and such is the drawback to any use of picturesque language. So stated, the positive creed of Agnosticism still retains its negative character. It has a series of propositions and terms, every one of which is a negation. A friend of my own, who was much pressed to say how much of the Athanasian Creed he still accepted, once said that he clung to the 'idea

that there was a sort of a something.' In homely words such as the unlearned can understand, that is precisely what the religion of the Agnostic comes to, 'the belief that there is a sort of a something, about which we can know nothing.'

Now let us profess that, as a philosophical answer to the theological problem, that is entirely our own position. The Positivist answer is of course the same as the Agnostic answer. Why, then, do we object to be called Agnostics? Simply because Agnostic is only dog-Greek for 'don't know,' and we have no taste to be called 'don't know.' The *Spectator* calls us Agnostics, but that is only by way of prejudice. Our religion does not consist in a comprehensive negation; we are not for ever replying to the theological problem; we are quite unconcerned by the theological problem, and have something that we do care for, and do know. Englishmen are Europeans, and many of them are Christians, and they usually prefer to call themselves Englishmen, Christians, or the like, rather than non-Asiatics or anti-Mahometans. Some people still prefer to call themselves Protestants rather than Christians, but the taste is dying out, except amongst Irish Orangemen, and even the Nonconformist newspaper has been induced by Mr. Matthew Arnold to drop its famous motto: 'The dissidence of Dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion.' For a man to say that his religion is Agnosticism is simply the sceptical equivalent of saying that his religion is Protestantism. Both mean that his religion is to deny and to differ.

But this is not religion. The business of religion is to affirm and to unite, and nothing can be religion but that which at once affirms truth and unites men.

The purpose of the present paper is to show that Agnosticism, though a valid and final answer to the theological or ontological problem — 'What is the ultimate cause of the world and of man?' — is not a religion nor the shadow of a religion. It offers none of the rudiments or elements of religion, and religion is not to be found in that line at all. It is the mere disembodied spirit of dead religion: as we said at the outset, it is the ghost of religion. Agnosticism, perfectly legitimate as the true answer of science to an effete question, has shown us that religion is not to be found anywhere within the realm of Cause. Having brought us to the answer, 'no cause that we know of,' it is laughable to call that negation religion. Mr. Mark Pattison, one of the acutest minds of modern Oxford, rather oddly says that the idea of deity has now been 'defecated to a pure transparency.' The evolution philosophy goes a step further and defecates the idea of cause to a pure transparency. Theology and ontology alike end in the Everlasting No with which science confronts all their assertions. But how whimsical is it to tell us that religion, which cannot find any resting-place in theology or ontology, is to find its true home in the Everlasting No! That which is defecated to a pure transparency can never supply a religion to any human being but a philosopher constructing a system. It is quite conceivable that religion is to end with theology, and both might

in the course of evolution become an anachronism. But if religion there is still to be, it cannot be found in this No-man's-land and Know-nothing creed. Better bury religion at once than let its ghost walk uneasy in our dreams.

The true lesson is that we must hark back, and leave the realm of Cause. The accident of religion has been mistaken for the essence of religion. The essence of religion is not to answer a question, but to govern and unite men and societies by giving them common beliefs and duties. Theologies tried to do this, and long did it, by resting on certain answers to certain questions. The progress of thought has upset one answer after another, and now the final verdict of philosophy is that all the answers are unmeaning, and that no rational answer can be given. It follows then that questions and answers, both but the accident of religion, must both be given up. A base of belief and duty must be looked for elsewhere, and when this has been found, then again religion will succeed in governing and uniting men. Where is this base to be found? Since the realm of Cause has failed to give us foothold, we must fall back upon the realm of Law — social, moral, and mental, and not merely physical. Religion consists, not in answering certain questions, but in making men of a certain quality. And the law, moral, mental, social, is pre-eminently the field wherein men may be governed and united. Hence to the religion of Cause there succeeds the religion of Law. But the religion of Law or Science is Positivism.

It is no part of my purpose to criticise Mr. Spencer's memorable essay, except so far as it is necessary to show that that which is a sound philosophical conclusion is not religion, simply by reason that it relates to the subject-matter of theology. But a few words may be suffered as to the historical evolution of religion. To many persons it will sound rather whimsical, and possibly almost a sneer, to trace the germs of religion to the ghost-theory. Our friends of the Psychical Research will prick up their ears, and expect to be taken *au grand sérieux*. But the conception is a thoroughly solid one, and of most suggestive kind. Beyond all doubt, the hypothesis of quasi-human immaterial spirits working within and behind familiar phenomena did take its rise from the idea of the other self which the imagination continually presents to the early reflections of man.

And, beyond all doubt, the phenomena of dreams, and the gradual construction of a theory of ghosts, is a very impressive and vivid form of the notion of the other self. It would, I think, be wrong to assert that it is the only form of the notion, and one can hardly suppose that Mr. Spencer would limit himself to that. But, in any case, the construction of a coherent theory of ghosts is a typical instance of a belief in a quasi-human spirit-world. Glorify and amplify this idea, and apply it to the whole of nature, and we get a god-world, a multitude of superhuman divine spirits.

That is the philosophical explanation of the rise of theology, of the peopling of Nature with divine spir-

its. But does it explain the rise of Religion? No, for theology and religion are not conterminous. Mr. Spencer has unwittingly conceded to the divines that which they assume so confidently — that theology is the same thing as religion, and that there was no religion at all until there was a belief in superhuman spirits within and behind Nature. This is obviously an oversight. We have to go very much further back for the genesis of religion. There were countless centuries of time, and there were, and there are, countless millions of men for whom no doctrine of superhuman spirits ever took coherent form. In all these ages and races, probably by far the most numerous that our planet has witnessed, there was religion in all kinds of definite form. Comte calls it Fetichism — terms are not important: roughly, we may call it Nature-worship. The religion in all these types was the belief and worship not of spirits of any kind, not of any immaterial, imagined being *inside* things, but of the actual visible things themselves — trees, stones, rivers, mountains, earth, fire, stars, sun, and sky. Some of the most abiding and powerful of all religions have consisted in elaborate worship of these physical objects treated frankly as physical objects, without trace of ghost, spirit, or god. To say nothing of fire-worship, river, and tree-worship, the venerable religion of China, far the most vast of all systematic religions, is wholly based on reverence for Earth, Sky, and Ancestors treated objectively, and not as the abode of subjective immaterial spirits.

Hence the origin of religion is to be sought in the

countless ages before the rise of theology; before spirits, ghosts, or gods ever took definite form in the human mind. The primitive uncultured man frankly worshipped external objects in love and in fear, ascribing to them quasi-human powers and feelings. All that we read about Animism, ghosts, spirits, and universal ideas of godhead in this truly primitive stage are metaphysical assumptions of men trying to read the ideas of later epochs into the facts of an earlier epoch. Nothing is more certain than that man everywhere started with a simple worship of natural objects. And the bearing of this on the future of religion is decisive. The religion of man in the vast cycles of primitive ages was reverence for Nature as influencing Man. The religion of man in the vast cycles that are to come will be the reverence for Humanity as supported by Nature. The religion of man in the twenty or thirty centuries of Theology was reverence for the assumed authors or controllers of Nature. But, that assumption having broken up, religion does not break up with it. On the contrary, it enters on a far greater and more potent career, inasmuch as the natural emotions of the human heart are now combined with the certainty of scientific knowledge. The final religion of enlightened man is the systematized and scientific form of the spontaneous religion of natural man. Both rest on the same elements — belief in the Power which controls his life, and grateful reverence for the Power so acknowledged. The primitive man thought that Power to be the object of Nature affecting Man. The cul-

tured man knows that Power to be Humanity itself, controlling and controlled by nature according to natural law. The transitional and perpetually changing creed of Theology has been an interlude. Agnosticism has uttered its epilogue. But Agnosticism is no more religion than differentiation or the nebular hypothesis is religion.

We have only to see what are the elements and ends of religion to recognize that we cannot find it in the negative and the unknown. In any reasonable use of language religion implies some kind of belief in a Power outside ourselves, some kind of awe and gratitude felt for that Power, some kind of influence exerted by it over our lives. There are always in some sort these three elements — belief, worship, conduct. A religion which gives us nothing in particular to believe, nothing as an object of awe and gratitude, which has no special relation to human duty, is not a religion at all. It may be formula, a generalization, a logical postulate; but it is not a religion. The universal presence of the unknowable (or rather of the unknown) sub-stratum is not a religion. It is a logical postulate. You may call it, if you please, the first axiom of science, a law of the human mind, or perhaps better the universal postulate of philosophy. But try it by every test which indicates religion and you will find it wanting.

The points which the Unknowable has in common with the object of any religion are very slight and superficial. As the universal substratum it has some analogy with other superhuman objects of worship.

But Force, Gravitation, Atom, Undulation, Vibration, and other abstract notions have much the same kind of analogy, but nobody ever dreamed of a religion of gravitation, or the worship of molecules. The Unknowable has managed to get itself spelt with a capital *U;* but Carlyle taught us to spell the Everlasting No with capitals also. The Unknowable is no doubt mysterious, and Godhead is mysterious. It certainly appeals to the sense of wonder, and the Trinity appeals to the sense of wonder. It suggests vague and infinite extension, as does the idea of deity: but then Time and Space equally suggest vague and infinite extension. Yet no one but a delirious Kantist ever confessed that Time and Space were his religion. These seem all the qualities which the Unknowable has in common with objects of worship — ubiquity, mystery, and immensity. But these qualities it shares with some other postulates of thought.

But try it by all the other recognized tests of religion. Religion is not made up of wonder, or of a vague sense of immensity, unsatisfied yearning after infinity. Theology, seeking a refuge in the unintelligible, has no doubt accustomed this generation to imagine that a yearning after infinity is the sum and substance of religion. But that is a metaphysical disease of the age. And there is no reason that philosophers should accept this hysterical piece of transcendentalism, and assume that they have found the field of religion when they have found a field for unquenchable yearning after infinity. Wonder ha

its place in religion, and so has mystery; but it is a subordinate place. The roots and fibres of religion are to be found in love, awe, sympathy, gratitude, consciousuess of inferiority and of dependence, community of will, acceptance of control, manifestation of purpose, reverence for majesty, goodness, creative energy, and life. Where these things are not, religion is not.

Let us take each one of these three elements of religion — belief, worship, conduct, and try them all in turn as applicable to the Unknowable. How mere a phrase must any religion be of which neither belief, nor worship, nor conduct can be spoken! Imagine a religion which can have no believers, because, *ex hypothesi*, its adepts are forbidden to believe anything about it. Imagine a religion which excludes the idea of worship, because its sole dogma is the infinity of Nothingness. Although the Unknowable is logically said to be Something, yet the something of which we neither know nor conceive anything is practically nothing. Lastly, imagine a religion which can have no relation to conduct; for obviously the Unknowable can give us no intelligible help to conduct, and *ex vi termini* can have no bearing on conduct. A religion which could not make any one any better; which would leave the human heart and human society just as it found them; which left no foothold for devotion, and none for faith; which could have no creed, no doctrines, no temples, no priests, no teachers, no rites, no morality, no beauty, no hope, no consolation; which is summed up in one

dogma — the Unknowable is everywhere, and evolution is its prophet — this is indeed 'to defecate religion to a pure transparency.'

The growing weakness of religion has long been that it is being thrust inch by inch off the platform of knowledge; and we watch with sympathy the desperate efforts of all religious spirits to maintain the relations between knowledge and religion. And now it hears the invitation of Evolution to abandon the domain of knowledge, and to migrate to the domain of no-knowledge. The true Rock of Ages, says the philosopher, is the Unknowable. To the eye of Faith all things are henceforth ἀκαταλήψια, as Cicero calls it. The paradox would hardly be greater if we were told that true religion consisted in unlimited Vice.

What is religion for? Why do we want it? And what do we expect it to do for us? If it can give us no sure ground for our minds to rest on, nothing to purify the heart, to exalt the sense of sympathy, to deepen our sense of beauty, to strengthen our resolves, to chasten us into resignation and to kindle a spirit of self-sacrifice — what is the good of it? The Unknowable, *ex hypothesi*, can do none of these things. The object of all religion, in any known variety of religion, has invariably had some quasi-human and sympathetic relation to man and human life. It follows from the very meaning of religion that it could not effect any of its work without such quality or relation. It would be hardly sane to make a religion out of the Equator or the Binomial theorem.

Whether it was the religion of the lowest savage, of the Polytheist, or of the Hegelian Theist; whether the object of the worship were a river, the Moon, the Sky, Apollo, Thor, God, or First Cause, there has always been some chain of sympathy — influence on the one side, and veneration on the other. However rudimentary, there must be a belief in some power influencing the believer, and whose influence he repays with awe and gratitude and a desire to conform his life thereto. But to make a religion out of the Unknowable is far more extravagant than to make it out of the Equator. We know something of the Equator; it influences seamen, equatorial peoples, and geographers not a little, and we all hesitate, as was once said, to speak disrespectfully of the Equator. But would it be blasphemy to speak disrespectfully of the Unknowable? Our minds are a blank about it. As to acknowledging the Unknowable, or trusting in it, or feeling its influence over us, or paying gratitude to it, or conforming our lives to it, or looking to it for help — the use of such words about it is unmeaning. We can wonder at it, as the child wonders at the 'twinkling star,' and that is all. It is a religion only to stare at.

Religion is not a thing of star-gazing and staring, but of life and action. And the condition of any such effect on our lives and our hearts is some sort of vital quality in that which is the object of the religion. The mountain, sun, or sky which untutored man worships is thought to have some sort of vital quality, some potency of the kind possessed by

organic beings. When mountain, sun, and sky cease to have this vital potency, educated man ceases to worship them. Of course all sorts and conditions of divine spirits are assumed in a pre-eminent degree to have this quality, and hence the tremendous force exerted by all religions of divine spirits. Philosophy and the euthanasia of theology have certainly reduced this vital quality to a minimum in our day, and I suppose Dean Mansel's Bampton Lectures touched the low-water mark of vitality as predicated of the Divine Being. Of all modern theologians, the Dean came the nearest to the Evolution negation. But there is a gulf which separates even his all-negative deity from Mr. Spencer's impersonal, unconscious, unthinking, and unthinkable Energy.

Knowledge is of course wholly within the sphere of the Known. Our moral and social science is, of course, within the sphere of knowledge. Moral and social well-being, moral and social education, progress, perfection naturally rest on moral and social science. Civilization rests on moral and social progress. And happiness can only be secured by both. But if religion has its sphere in the Unknown and Unknowable, it is thereby outside all this field of the Known. In other words Religion (of the Unknowable type) is *ex hypothesi* outside the sphere of knowledge, of civilization, of social discipline, of morality, of progress, and of happiness. It has no part or parcel in human life. It fills a brief and mysterious chapter in a system of philosophy.

By their fruits you shall know them is true of all

sorts of religion. And what are the fruits of the Unknowable but the Dead Sea apples. Obviously it can teach us nothing, influence us in nothing, for the absolutely incalculable and unintelligible can give us neither ground for action nor thought. Nor can it touch any one of our feelings but that of wonder, mystery, and sense of human helplessness. Helpless, objectless, apathetic wonder at an inscrutable infinity may be attractive to a metaphysical divine; but it does not sound like a working force in the world. Does the Evolutionist commune with the Unknowable in the secret silence of his chamber? Does he meditate on it, saying, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength? One would like to see the new *Imitatio Ignoti.* It was said of old, *Ignotum omne pro magnifico.* But the new version is to be *Ignotum omne pro divino.*

One would like to know how much of the Evolutionist's day is consecrated to seeking the Unknowable in a devout way, and what the religious exercises might be. How does the man of science approach the All-Nothingness? and the microscopist, and the embryologist, and the vivisectionist? What do they learn about it, what strength or comfort does it give them? Nothing — nothing: it is an ever-present conundrum to be everlastingly given up, and perpetually to be asked of one's self and one's neighbors, but without waiting for the answer. Tantalus and Sisyphus bore their insoluble tasks, and the Evolutionist carries about his riddle without an answer, his unquenchable thirst to know that which he only

knows he can never know. *Quisque suos patimur Manes.* But Tantalus and Sisyphus called it Hell and the retribution of the Gods. The Evolutionist calls it Religion, and one might almost say Paradise.

A child comes up to our Evolutionist friend, looks up in his wise and meditative face, and says, 'Oh! wise and great Master, what is religion?' And he tells that child, 'It is the presence of the Unknowable.' 'But what,' asks the child, 'am I to believe about it?' 'Believe that you can never know anything about it.' 'But how am I to learn to do my duty?' 'Oh! for duty you must turn to the known, to moral and social science.' And a mother wrung with agony for the loss of her child, or the wife crushed by the death of her children's father, or the helpless and the oppressed, the poor and the needy, men, women, and children, in sorrow, doubt, and want, longing for something to comfort them and to guide them, something to believe in, to hope for, to love, and to worship — they come to our philosopher and they say, 'You men of science have routed our priests, and have silenced our old teachers. What religious faith do you give us in its place?' And the philosopher replies (his full heart bleeding for them) and he says, 'Think on the Unknowable.'

And in the hour of pain, danger, or death, can any one think of the Unknowable, hope anything of the Unknowable, or find any consolation therein? Altars might be built to some Unknown God, conceived as a real being, knowing us, though not known by us yet. But altars to the unknowable infinity, even

metaphorical altars, are impossible, for this unknown can never be known, and we have not the smallest reason to imagine that it either knew us, or affects us, or anybody, or anything. As the Unknowable cannot bring men together in a common belief, or for common purposes, or kindred feeling, it can no more unite men than the precession of the equinoxes can unite them. So there can never be congregations of Unknowable worshippers, nor churches dedicated to the Holy Unknowable, nor images nor symbols of the Unknowable mystery. Yes! there is one symbol of the Infinite Unknowable, and it is perhaps the most definite and ultimate word that can be said about it. The precise and yet inexhaustible language of mathematics enables us to express in a common algebraic formula, the exact combination of the unknown raised to its highest power of infinity. That formula is (x^n), and here we have the beginning and perhaps the end of a symbolism for the religion of the Infinite Unknowable. Schools, academies, temples of the Unknowable, there cannot be. But where two or three are gathered together to worship the Unknowable, there the algebraic formula may suffice to give form to their emotions: they may be heard to profess their unwearying belief in (x^n), even if no weak brother with ritualist tendencies be heard to cry, 'O x^n, love us, help us, make us one with thee!'

These things have their serious side, and suggest the real difficulties in the way of the theory. The alternative is this: Is religion a mode of answering a question in ontology, or is it an institution for affect-

ing human life by acting on the human spirit? If it be the latter, then there can be no religion of the Unknowable, and the sphere of religion must be sought elsewhere, in the Knowable. We may accept with the utmost confidence all that the evolution philosophy asserts and denies as to the perpetual indications of an ultimate energy, omnipresent and unlimited, and, so far as we can see, of inscrutable mysteriousness. That remains an ultimate scientific idea, one no doubt of profound importance. But why should this idea be dignified with the name of religion, when it has not one of the elements of religion, except infinity and mystery? The hallowed name of religion has meant, in a thousand languages, man's deepest convictions, his surest hopes, the most sacred yearnings of his heart, that which can bind in brotherhood generations of men, comfort the fatherless and the widow, uphold the martyr at the stake, and the hero in his long battle. Why retain this magnificent word, rich with the associations of all that is great, pure, and lovely in human nature, if it is to be henceforth limited to an idea, and can only be expressed by the formula (x^n); and which by the hypothesis can have nothing to do with either knowledge, belief, sympathy, hope, life, duty, or happiness? It is not religion, this. It is a logician's artifice to escape from an awkward dilemma.

One word in conclusion to those who would see religion a working reality, and not a logical artifice. The startling *reductio ad absurdum* of relegating religion to the unknowable is only the last step in the

process which has gradually reduced religion to an incomprehensible *minimum*. And this has been the work of theologians obstinately fighting a losing battle, and withdrawing at every defeat into a more impregnable and narrower fastness. They have thrown over one after another the claims of religion and the attributes of divinity. They are so hopeless of continuing the contest on the open field of the known that they more and more seek to withdraw to the cloud-world of the transcendental. They are so terribly afraid of an anthropomorphic God that they have sublimated him into a metaphorical expression — 'defecated the idea to a pure transparency,' as one of the most eminent of them puts it. Dean Mansel is separated from Mr. Spencer by degree, not in kind. And now they are pushed by Evolution into the abyss, and are solemnly assured that the reconciliation of Religion and Science is effected by this religion of the Unknowable — this *chimæra bombinans in vacuo*. Their Infinites and their Incomprehensibles, their Absolute and their Unconditioned, have brought them to this. It is only one step from the sublime to the unknowable.

Practically, so far as it affects the lives of men and women in the battle of life, the Absolute and Unconditioned Godhead of learned divines is very much the same thing as the Absolute Unknowable. You may rout a logician by a 'pure transparency,' but you cannot check vice, crime, and war by it, nor train up men and women in holiness and truth. And the set of all modern theology is away from the an-

thropomorphic and into the Absolute. In trying to save a religion of the spirit-world, theologians are abandoning all religion of the real world; they are turning religion into formulas and phrases, and are taking out of it all power over life, duty, and society.

I say, in a word, unless religion is to be anthropomorphic, there can be no working religion at all. How strange is this new cry, sprung up in our own generation, that religion is dishonored by being anthropomorphic! Fetichism, Polytheism, Confucianism, Mediæval Christianity, and Bible Puritanism have all been intensely anthropomorphic, and all owe their strength and dominion to that fact. You can have no religion without kinship, sympathy, relation of some human kind between the believer, worshipper, servant, and the object of his belief, veneration, and service. The Neo-Theisms have all the same moral weakness that the Unknowable has. They offer no kinship, sympathy, or relation whatever between worshipper and worshipped. They too are logical formulas begotten in controversy, dwelling apart from man and the world. If the formula of the Unknowable is (x^n) or the Unknown raised to infinity, theirs is (nx), some unknown expression of Infinity. Neither (x^n) nor (nx) will ever make good men and women.

If we leave the region of formulas, and go back to the practical effect of religion on human conduct, we must be driven to the conclusion that the future of religion is to be, not only what every real religion has ever been, anthropomorphic — but frankly anthropic. The attempted religion of Spiritism has lost

one after another every resource of a real religion, until *risu solvuntur tabulæ*, and it ends in a religion of Nothingism. It is the Nemesis of Faith in spiritual abstractions and figments. The hypothesis has burst, and leaves the Void. The future will have then to return to the Knowable and the certainly known, to the religion of Realism. It must give up explaining the Universe, and content itself with explaining human life. Humanity is the grandest object of reverence within the region of the real and the known, Humanity with the World on which it rests as its base and environment. Religion, having failed in the superhuman world, returns to the human world. Here religion can find again all its certainty, all its depth of human sympathy, all its claim to command and reward the purest self-sacrifice and love. We can take our place again with all the great religious spirits who have ever moulded the faith and life of men, and we find ourselves in harmony with the devout of every faith who are manfully battling with sin and discord. The way for us is the clearer as we find the religion of Spiritism, in its long and restless evolution of thirty centuries, ending in the legitimate deduction, the religion of the Unknowable, a paradox as memorable as any in the history of the human mind. The alternative is very plain. Shall we cling to a religion of Spiritism when philosophy is whittling away spirit to Nothing? Or shall we accept a religion of Realism, where all the great traditions and functions of religion are retained unbroken?

FREDERIC HARRISON.

RETROGRESSIVE RELIGION.[1]

In days when duelling was common, and its code of ceremonial well elaborated, a deadly encounter was preceded by a polite salute. Having by his obeisance professed to be his antagonist's very humble servant, each forthwith did his best to run him through the body.

[1] Excepting its last section, this article had been written, and part of it sent to the printers, by the 30th of May: and, consequently, before I saw the article of Sir James Stephen, published in the last number of this Review. Hence the fact that only in its last section have I been able (without undue interruption of my argument) to refer to points in Sir James Stephen's criticism.

Concerning his criticism generally, I may remark that it shows me how dangerous it is to present separately, in brief space, conclusions which it has taken a large space to justify. Unhappily, twelve pages do not suffice for adequate exposition of a system of thought, or even of its bases; and misapprehension is pretty certain to occur if a statement contained in twelve pages is regarded as more than a rude outline. If Sir James Stephen will refer to §§49-207 of the *Principles of Sociology*, occupying 350 pages, I fancy that instead of seeming to him 'weak,' the evidence there given of the origin of religious ideas will seem to him very strong; and I venture also to think that if he will refer to *First Principles* §§ 24-26, § 50, §§ 58-61, § 194, and to the *Principles of Pyschology* §§ 347-351, he may find that what he thinks 'an unmeaning playing with words,' has more meaning than appears at first sight.

This usage is recalled to me by the contrast between the compliments with which Mr. Harrison begins his article, 'The Ghost of Religion,' and the efforts he afterwards makes to destroy, in the brilliant style habitual with him, all but the negative part of that which he applauds. After speaking with too flattering eulogy of the mode in which I have dealt with current theological doctrines, he does his best, amid flashes of wit coming from its polished surface, to pass the sword of his logic through the ribs of my argument, and let out its vital principle — that element in it which is derived from the religious ideas and sentiments that have grown up along with human evolution, but which is inconsistent with the creed Mr. Harrison preaches.

So misleading was the professed agreement with which he commenced his article, that, as I read on, I was some time in awakening to the fact that I had before me not a friend, but, controversially speaking, a determined enemy, who was seeking to reduce, as he would say to a ghostly form, that surviving element of religion which, as I had contended, Agnosticism contains. Even when this dawned on me, the suavity of Mr. Harrison's first manner continued so influential that I entertained no thought of defending myself. It was only after perceiving that what he modestly calls 'a rider,' was described by one journal as 'a criticism keen, trenchant, destructive,' while by some other journals kindred estimates of it were formed, that I decided to make a reply as soon as pending engagements allowed.

Recognizing, then, the substance of Mr. Harrison's article as being an unsparing assault on the essential part of that doctrine which I have set forth, I shall here not scruple to defend it in the most effective way I can; not allowing the laudation with which Mr. Harrison prefaces his ridicule, to negative such rejoinders, incisive as I can make them, as will best serve my purpose.

A critic who, in a recent number of the *Edinburgh Review*, tells the world in very plain language what he thinks about a book of mine, and who has been taken to task by the editor of *Knowledge* for his injustice, refers to Mr. Harrison (whom he describes in a felicitous phrase as looking at me from 'a very opposite pole') as being, on one point, in agreement with him.[1] But for this reference it would not have occurred to me to associate in thought Mr. Harrison's criticisms with those of the Edinburgh Reviewer; but now that comparison is suggested, I am struck by the fact that Mr. Harrison's representations of my views diverge from the realities no less widely than those of a critic whose antagonism is unqualified, and whose animus is displayed in his first paragraph.

So anxious is Mr. Harrison to show that the doctrine he would discredit has no kinship to the doctrines called religious, that he will not allow me, without protest, to use the language needed for conveying my meaning. The expression 'an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed,'

[1] *Knowledge*, March, 14, 1884.

he objects to as being 'perhaps a rather equivocal reversion to the theologic type;' and he says this because 'in the Athanasian Creed the Third Person "proceeds" from the First and the Second.' It is hard that I should be debarred from thus using the word by this preceding use. Perhaps Mr. Harrison will be surprised to learn that, as originally written, the expression ran — 'an Infinite and Eternal Energy by which all things are created and sustained;' and that in the proof I struck out the last clause because, though the words did not express more than I meant, the ideas associated with them might mislead, and there might result such an insinuation as that which Mr. Harrison makes. The substituted expression, which embodies my thought in the most colorless way, I cannot relinquish because he does not like it — or rather, indeed, because he does not like the thought itself. It is not convenient to him that the Unknowable, which he repeatedly speaks of as a pure negation, should be represented as that through which all things exist. And, indeed, it would greatly embarrass him to recognize this; since the recognition would prevent him from asserting that 'none of the positive attributes which have ever been predicated of God can be used of this Energy.'

Not only does he, as in the last sentence, negatively misdescribe the character of this Energy, but he positively misdescribes it. He says — 'It remains always Energy, Force: nothing anthropomorphic; such as electricity, or anything else that we might conceive as the ultimate basis of all the physical

forces.' Now, on page 17 of the essay Mr. Harrison criticises, there occurs the sentence — 'The final outcome of that speculation commenced by the primitive man, is that the Power manifested throughout the Universe distinguished as material, is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness;' and on page 19 it is said that 'this necessity we are under to think of the external energy in terms of the internal energy, gives rather a spiritualistic than a materialistic aspect to the Universe.' Does he really think that the meaning of these sentences is conveyed by comparing the ultimate energy to 'electricity'? And does he think this in face of the statement on page 19 that 'phenomenal manifestations of this ultimate energy can in no wise show us what it is'? Surely that which is described as the substratum at once of material and mental existence, bears towards us and towards the Universe a relation utterly unlike that which electricity bears to the other physical forces.

Persistent thinking along defined grooves, causes inability to get out of them; and Mr. Harrison, in more than one way, illustrates this. So completely is his thought moulded to that form of phenomenalism entertained by M. Comte, that, in spite of repeated denials of it, he ascribes it to me; and does this in face of the various presentations of an opposed phenomenalism, which I have given in the article he criticises and elsewhere. Speaking after his lively manner of the Unknown Cause as an 'ever present conundrum to be everlastingly given up,' he asks —

'How does the man of science approach the All-Nothingness?' Now, M. Comte describes Positivism as becoming perfect when it reaches the power 'se représenter tous les divers phénomènes observables comme des cas particuliers d'un seul fait général . . . en considérant comme absolument inaccessible et vide de sens pour nous la recherche de ce qu'on appelle les *causes*, soit premières, soit finales;'[1] and in pursuance of this view, the Comtean system limits itself to phenomena, and deliberately ignores the existence of anything implied by the phenomena. But though M. Comte thus exhibits to us a doctrine which, performing 'the happy despatch,' eviscerates things and leaves a shell of appearances with no reality inside; yet I have in more than one place, and in the most emphatic way, declined thus to commit intellectual suicide. So far from regarding that which transcends phenomena as the 'All-Nothingness,' I regard it as the All-Being. Everywhere I have spoken the Unknowable as the Ultimate Reality — the sole existence: all things present to consciousness being but shows of it. Mr. Harrison entirely inverts our relative positions. As I understand the case, the 'All-Nothingness' is that phenomenal existence in which M. Comte and his disciples profess to dwell — profess, I say, because in their ordinary thoughts they recognize an existence transcending phenomena, just as much as other people recognize it.

That the opposition between the view actually held by me and the view ascribed to me by Mr. Har

[1] *Système de Philosophie Positive*, vol. i. pp. 5 and 14.

rison, is absolute, will be most clearly seen on observing the contrast he draws between my view and the view of the late Dean Mansel. He says:—

> Of all modern theologians, the Dean came the nearest to the Evolution negation. But there is a gulf which separates even his all-negative deity from Mr. Spencer's impersonal, unconscious, unthinking, and unthinkable Energy.

It is quite true that there exists this gulf. But then the propositions forming the two sides of the gulf are the opposites of those which Mr. Harrison represents. For whereas, in common with his teacher Sir William Hamilton, Dean Mansel alleged that our consciousness of the Absolute is merely 'a negation of conceivability:' I have, over a space of ten pages,[1] contended that our consciousness of the Absolute is not negative but positive, and is the one indestructible element of consciousness 'which persists at all times, under all circumstances, and cannot cease until consciousness ceases'—have argued that while the Power which transcends phenomena cannot be brought within the forms of our finite thought, yet that, as being a necessary datum of every thought, belief in its existence has, among our beliefs, the highest validity of any: is not, as Sir W. Hamilton alleges, a belief with which we are supernaturally 'inspired,' but is a normal deliverance of consciousness. Thus, as represented by Mr. Harrison, Dean Mansel's views and my own are exactly transposed. Misrepresentation could not, I think, go further.

The conception I have everywhere expressed and

[1] *First Principles*, § 26.

implied, of the relation between human life and the Ultimate Cause, if not diametrically opposed with like distinctness to the conception Mr. Harrison ascribes to me, is yet thus opposed in an unmistakable way. After suggesting that (x^n) would be an appropriate symbol 'for the religion of the infinite Unknowable,' and amusing himself and his readers by imaginary prayers made to (x^n); after making a subsequent elaboration of his *jeu d'esprit* by suggesting that (nx) would serve for the formula of certain modern Theisms, he says of these: —

> The Neo-Theisms have all the same moral weakness that the Unknowable has. They offer no kinship, sympathy, or relation whatever between worshipper and worshipped. They too are logical formulas begotten in controversy, dwelling apart from man and the world.

Now, considering that in the article he had before him, there is in various ways implied the view that 'the power which manifests itself in consciousness is but a differently conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness — considering that there, as everywhere throughout my books, the implication is that our lives, alike physical and mental, in common with all the activities, organic and inorganic, amid which we live, are but the workings of this Power, it is not a little astonishing to find it described as simply a 'logical formula begotten in controversy.' Does Mr. Harrison really think that he represents the facts when he describes as 'dwelling apart from man and the world,' that Power of which man and the world are regarded products, and

which is manifested through man and the world from instant to instant?

Did I not need the space for other topics, I might at much greater length contrast Mr. Harrison's erroneous versions with the true ones. I might enlarge on the fact that, though the name Agnosticism fitly expresses the confessed inability to know or conceive the nature of the Power manifested through phenomena, it fails to indicate the confessed ability to recognize the existence of that Power as of all things the most certain. I might make clear the contrast between that Comtean Agnosticism which says that 'Theology and ontology alike end in the Everlasting No with which science confronts all their assertions,'[1] and the Agnosticism set forth in *First Principles*, which, along with its denials, emphatically utters an Everlasting Yes. And I might show in detail that Mr. Harrison is wrong in implying that Agnosticism, as I hold it, is anything more than silent with respect to the question of personality; since, though the attributes of personality, as we know it, cannot be conceived by us as attributes of the Unknown Cause of things, yet 'duty requires us neither to affirm nor deny personality,' but 'to submit ourselves with all humility to the established limits of our intelligence' in the conviction that the choice is not 'between personality and something lower than personality,' but 'between personality and something higher,'[2] and that the Ultimate Power is no more

[1] Harrison, *Nineteenth Century* for March, p. 497. [*Supra*, p. 28.]
[2] *First Principles*, § 31.

representable in terms of human consciousness than human consciousness is representable in terms of a plant's functions.' [1]

But without further evidence, what I have said sufficiently proves that Mr. Harrison's 'criticism keen, trenchant, destructive,' as it was called, is destructive, not of an actual doctrine, but simply of an imaginary one. I should hardly have expected that Mr. Harrison, in common with the Edinburgh Reviewer, would have taken the course, so frequent with critics, of demolishing a *simulacrum* and walking off in triumph as though the reality had been demolished. Adopting his own figure, I may say that he has with ease passed his weapon through and through 'The Ghost of Religion;' but then it is only the ghost: the reality stands unscathed.

Before passing to the consideration of that alternative doctrine which Mr. Harrison would have us accept, it will be well briefly to deal with certain of his subordinate propositions.

After re-stating, in a succinct way, the hypothesis that from the conception of the ghost originated the conceptions of supernatural beings in general, including the highest, and after saying that 'one can hardly suppose that Mr. Spencer would limit himself to that,' Mr. Harrison describes what he alleges to be a prior, and, indeed, the primordial, form of religion. He says: —

> There were countless centuries of time, and there were, and

[1] *Essays*, vol. iii. p. 251.

there are, countless millions of men for whom no doctrine of superhuman spirits ever took coherent form. In all these ages and races, probably by far the most numerous that our planet has witnessed, there was religion in all kinds of definite form. Comte calls it Fetichism — terms are not important: roughly, we may call it Nature-worship. The religion in all these types was the belief and worship not of spirits of any kind, not of any immaterial, imagined being *inside* things, but of the actual visible things themselves — trees, stones, rivers, mountains, earth, fire, stars, sun, and sky. (P. 31.)

The attitude of discipleship is not favorable to inquiry; and, as fanatical Christians show us, inquiry is sometimes thought sinful and likely to bring punishment. I do not suppose that Mr. Harrison's reverence for M. Comte has gone this length; but still it has gone far enough not only to cause his continued adherence to a doctrine espoused by M. Comte, which has been disproved, but also to make him tacitly assume that this doctrine is accepted by one whose rejection of it was long ago set forth. In the *Descriptive Sociology* there are classified and tabulated statements concerning some eighty peoples; and besides these I have had before me masses of facts concerning many other peoples. An induction based on over a hundred examples, warrants me in saying that there has never existed anywhere such a religion as that which Mr. Harrison ascribes to 'countless millions of men' during 'countless centuries of time.' A chapter on 'Idol-worship and Fetich-worship' in the *Principles of Sociology*, gives proof that in the absence of a developed ghost-theory, Fetichism is absent. I have shown that, whereas among the lowest races, such as the Juángs, Adamanese, Fue-

gians, Australians, Tasmanians, and Bushmen, there is no Fetichism; Fetichism reaches its greatest height in considerably-advanced societies, like those of ancient Peru and modern India: in which last place, Sir Alfred Lyall tells us, 'not only does the husbandman pray to his plough, the fisher to his net, the weaver to his loom; but the scribe adores his pen, and the banker his account books.'[1] And I have remarked that, 'had Fetichism been conspicuous among the lowest races, and inconspicuous among the higher, the statement that it was primordial might have been held proved; but that, as the facts happen to be exactly the opposite, the statement is conclusively disproved.'[2]

Similarly with Nature-worship: regarding this as being partially distinguished from Fetichism by the relatively imposing character of its objects. In a subsequent chapter I have shown that this also is an aberrant development of ghost-worship. Among all the many tribes and nations, remote in place and unlike in type, whose superstitions I have examined, I have found no case in which any great natural appearance or power, feared and propitiated, was not identified with a human or quasi-human personality. I am not aware that Professor Max Müller, or any adherent of his, has been able to produce a single case in which there exists worship of the great natural objects themselves, pure and simple — the heavens, the sun, the moon, the dawn, etc.: objects which,

[1] 'Religion of an Indian Province,' *Fortnightly Review* for February, 1872, p. 131. [2] *Principles of Sociology*, § 162.

according to the mythologists, become personalized by 'a disease of language.' Personalization exists at the outset; and the worship is in all cases the worship of an indwelling ghost-derived being.

That these conclusions are necessitated by an exhaustive examination of the evidence, is shown by the fact that they have been forced on Dr. E. B. Tylor notwithstanding his original enunciation of other conclusions. In a lecture 'On Traces of the Early Mental Condition of Man,' delivered at the Royal Institution on the 15th of March, 1867, he said: —

> It is well known that the lower races of mankind account for the facts and events of the outer world by ascribing a sort of human life and personality to animals, and even to plants, rocks, streams, winds, the sun and stars, and so on through the phenomena of nature . . . It would probably add to the clearness of our conception of the state of mind which thus sees in all nature the action of animated life and the presence of innumerable spiritual beings, if we gave it the name of Animism instead of Fetichism.

Here, having first noted that the conception of Fetichism derived by Dr. Tylor from multitudinous facts, is not like that of Mr. Harrison, who conceives Fetichism to be a worship of the object themselves, and not a worship of their indwelling spirits, we further note that Dr. Tylor regards this ascription of souls to all objects, inanimate as well as animate, which he proposes to call Animism rather than Fetichism, as being primordial. In the earlier part of his *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871 (as in vol. i. p. 431), we find a re-statement of this view; but further on we observe a modification of it, as instance the following sentence in vol. ii. p. 100: —

It seems as though the conception of a human soul, when once attained to by man, served as a type or model on which he framed not only his ideas of other souls of lower grade, but also his ideas of spiritual beings in general, from the tiniest elf that sports in the long grass, up to the heavenly Creator and Ruler of the world, the Great Spirit.

And then, in articles published in *Mind* for April and for July, 1877, Dr. Tylor represented himself as holding a doctrine identical with that set forth by me in the *Principles of Sociology;* namely that the belief in a human ghost is original, and that the beliefs in spirits inhabiting inanimate objects, giving rise to Fetichism and Nature-worship, are derived beliefs.

An emphatic negative is thus given to Mr. Harrison's assertion that 'Nothing is more certain than that man everywhere started with a simple worship of natural objects.' And if he holds that 'the bearing of this on the future of religion is decisive'—if, as he says, 'the religion of man in the vast cycles of primitive ages was reverence for nature as influencing Man,' and if, as he infers, 'the religion of man in the vast cycles that are to come will be the reverence for Humanity as supported by Nature'—if, as it thus seems, primitive religion as conceived by him is a basis for what he conceives to be the religion of the future; then his conception of the religion of the future is, in so far, baseless.

And now I come to the chief purpose of this article—an examination of that alternative faith which Mr. Harrison has on sundry occasions set forth with so much eloquence. As originally designed, the

essay, 'Religion: a Retrospect and Prospect,' was to include a section in which, before considering what the future of religion was likely to be, I proposed to consider what its future was *not* likely to be; and the topic to be dealt with in this section was the so-called Religion of Humanity. After collecting materials and writing ten pages, I began to perceive that besides being not needful for my purpose, this section would form too large an excrescence. A further feeling came into play. Though I had for many years looked forward to the time when an examination of the Positivist creed would fall within the lines of my work, yet when I began to put on paper that which I had frequently thought, it seemed to me that I was making an uncalled-for attack on men whom I had every reason to admire for their high characters and their unwearying efforts for human welfare. The result was that I put aside what I had written, and gave up my long-cherished intention. Now, however, that Mr. Harrison has thrown down the gauntlet, I take it up, at once willingly and unwillingly — willingly in so far as acceptance of the challenge is concerned, unwillingly because I feel some reluctance in dealing hard blows at a personal friend.

Surprise has been the feeling habitually produced in me on observing the incongruity between the astounding claims made by the propounder of this new creed, and the great intelligence of disciples whose faith appears proof against the shock which these astounding claims produce on ordinary minds. Those

who, from a broad view of human progress, have gained the general impression that 'The individual withers, and the world is more and more,' must be disinclined to believe that in the future any one individual will impose on the world a government like that sought to be imposed by M. Comte; who, unable to influence any considerable number of men while he lived, consoled himself with the thought of absolutely ruling all men after his death. Met, as he complained, by 'a conspiracy of silence,' he was nevertheless confident that, very shortly becoming converts, mankind at large would hereafter live and move and have their being within his elaborated formulas. Papal assumption is modest compared with the assumption of 'the founder of the religion of Humanity.' A pope may canonize a saint or two; but M. Comte undertook the canonization of all those men recorded in history whom he thought specially worthy of worship. And such a canonization! — days assigned for the remembrance with honor of mythical personages like Hercules and Orpheus, and writers such as Terence and Juvenal; other days on which honors, like in degree, are given to Kant and to Robertson, to Bernard de Palissy and to Schiller, to Copernicus and to Dollond, to Otway and to Racine, to Locke and to Fréret, to Froissart and to Dalton, to Cyrus and to Penn — such a canonization! in which these selected men, who are Positivist saints for ordinary days, are headed by greater saints for Sundays; with the result that Socrates and Godfrey are thus placed on a par; that while a day is dedicated to Kepler, a week is

dedicated to Gall; Tasso has a week assigned to him, and Goethe a day; Mozart presides over a week, and a day is presided over by Beethoven; a week is made sacred to Louis the Eleventh, and a day to Washington — such a canonization! under which the greatest men, giving their names to months, are so selected that Frederick the Second and St. Paul alike bear this distinction; Gutenberg and Shakespeare head adjacent months; and while Bichat gives his name to a month, Newton gives his name to a week! This, which recalls the saints' calendar of the Babylonians, among whom, as Professor Sayce shows, 'each day of the year had been assigned to its particular deity or patron saint,'[1] exemplifies in but one way M. Comte's consuming passion for regulating posterity, and the colossal vanity which led him to believe that mankind would hereafter perform their daily actions as he dictated. He not only settles the hierarchy of saints who are above others to be worshipped, but he prescribes the forms of worship in minute detail. Nine sacraments are specified; prayer is to be made thrice a day; for the 'daily expression of their emotions both in public and private' it is predicted that future men will use Italian;[2] and it is a recommended 'rule of worship' of the person you adore, that a 'precise idea of the place, next of the seat or the attitude, and lastly, of the dress, appropriate to each particular case,'[3] should be summoned before the mind. Add to which that in the

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. vii. p. 157.
[2] *System of Positive Polity*, vol. iv. p. 85.
[3] *Catechism*, p. 100.

elaborate rubric the sacred sign (replacing the sign of the cross) and derived 'from our cerebral theory' (he had a phrenology of his own) consists in placing 'our hand in succession on the three chief organs — those of love, order, and progress.' Of banners used in 'solemn processions,' it is directed that 'on their white side will be the holy image; on their green, the sacred formula of Positivism;' and the symbol of our Divinity will always be a woman of the age of thirty, with her son in her arms.'[1] Nor was M. Comte's devouring desire to rule the future satisfied with thus elaborating the observances of his cult. He undertook to control the secular culture of men, as well as that culture which, I suppose, he distinguished as sacred. There is 'a Positivist library for the nineteenth century,' consisting of 150 volumes; the list being compiled for the purpose 'of guiding the more thoughtful minds.'[2] So that M. Comte's tastes and judgments in poetry, science, history, etc., are to be the standards for future generations. And the numerous regulations of these kinds are in addition to the other multitudinous regulations contained in those parts of the highly elaborated *System of Positive Polity*, in which M. Comte prescribes the social organization, under the arrangements of which 'the affective, speculative, patrician, and plebeian' classes are to carry on the business of their lives.

It is, I say, not a little remarkable that a height of assumption exceeding that ever before displayed by a human being — a self-deification along with the

[1] *Catechism of Positivism*, pp. 142–3. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

deification of Humanity — should not have negatived belief in the general doctrines set forth by him. One might have thought that by exhibiting a lack of mental balance unparalleled among sane people, he would have wholly discredited his speculations. However, recognizing the fact that this is not so, and assuming that M. Comte's disciples discover in the Religion of Humanity propounded by him, a truth which survives recognition of his — eccentricities, let us call them — we will now go on to consider this proposed creed.

To those who have studied that natural génesis of religion summarized in the article Mr. Harrison criticises,[1] it will appear anomalous that a proposed new and higher religion should be, in large measure, a rehabilitation of the religion with which mankind commenced, and from which they have been insensibly diverging, until the more advanced among them have quite lost sight of it. After an era during which worship of the dead was practised all the world over, alike by savages and by the progenitors of the civilized — after an era of slow emergence from this primitive religion, during which the propitiation of ghosts completely human was replaced by the propitiation of comparatively few superhuman ghosts or spirits, and finally by the propitiation of a spirit infinitely transcending humanity, and from which human attributes have been gradually dropped, leaving only the most abstract, which are themselves

[1] And set forth at length in the *Principles of Sociology*, Part I.

fading; we are told by the Positivists that there is coming an era in which the Universal Power men have come to believe in, will be ignored; and human individualities, regarded now singly and now in their aggregate, will again be the objects of religious feeling. If the worship of the dead is not to be completely resuscitated, still the proposal is to resuscitate it in a form but partially transfigured. Though there is no direction to offer at graves food and drink for ghosts, yet public worship of the so-called 'Great Being Humanity,' 'must be performed in the midst of the tombs of the more eminent dead, each tomb surrounded by a sacred grove, the scene of the homage paid by their family and their fellow citizens;'[1] while 'at times within each consecrated tomb, the priesthood will' superintend the honoring of the good man or woman:[2] proposed usages analogous to those of many ancestor-worshipping peoples. Moreover, again taking lessons from various races of pagans, past and present, there is to be 'a domestic altar, at which, in kneeling attitude, adoration is to be paid to our own personal patrons, our guardian angels or household gods:'[3] these being persons living or dead. And as exemplified by M. Comte's worship of Clotilde de Vaux, the praying to a beloved person or wife may be continued for years: recalling the customs of numerous peoples who invoked departed members of their families; as instance the Balonda, among whom, if the 'spot

[1] *Positive Polity*, vol. iv. p. 139. [2] *Catechism*, p. 137.
[3] *Positive Polity*, vol. iv. pp. 100, 101.

where a favorite wife has died,'. . . 'is revisited, it is to pray to her.'[1]

Now, omitting for the present all thought about the worthiness of these objects of worship, and considering only the general nature of the system, there arises the question — How happens it that while in other respects M. Comte delineates human evolution as progressive, he, in this respect, delineates it as retrogressive? Beyond all question, civilization has been a gradual divergence from primitive savagery. According to his own account, the advance in social organization, in knowledge, in science, in art, presents a certain general continuity. Even in speculative thought, M. Comte's formula of the three stages, the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive, tacitly asserts movement in the same direction towards a final theory. How happens it, then, that with an advancing change in other things, there is to occur a retreating change in one thing? — along with progression in all else, retrogression in religion!

This retrogressive character of the Comtean religion is shown in sundry other ways — being, indeed, sometimes distinctly admitted or avowed. Thus we are told that 'the domain of the priesthood must be reconstituted in its integrity; medicine must again become a part of it,'[2] as from savage life upwards it was until modern times. Again, education has been slowly emancipating itself from ecclesiasticism; but in M. Comte's scheme, after the sacrament of initiation, the child passes 'from its unsystematic training

[1] Livingstone, *South Africa*, p. 314. [2] *Catechism*, p. 50.

under the eye of its mother, to the systematic education given by the priesthood;'[1] just as, after a parallel ceremony, the child does among the Congo people,[2] and as it did among the ancient Mexicans.[3] And knowingly or unknowingly, M. Comte followed the lead of the Egyptians, who had a formal judging of the dead by the living; honorable burial was allowed by them only in the absence of accusations against the deceased proved before judges; and by M. Comte it is provided that after a prescribed interval, the priesthood shall decide whether the remains shall be transferred from their probationary resting-place to 'the sacred wood' reserved for the 'sanctified.' Most remarkable of all, however, is the reversion to an early type of religious belief in the prescribed worship of objects, animate and inanimate. In 'Table A, System of Sociolatry,' there are times named for the 'Festival of the Animals,' 'Festival of Fire,' 'Festival of the Sun,' 'Festival of Iron,' etc.

But now, passing over M. Comte's eccentricities and inconsistencies, let us consider on its merits the creed he enunciated. In addition to private worship of guardian angels or household gods, there is to be a public worship of the 'Great Being Humanity.' How are we to conceive this Great Being? Various conceptions of it are possible; and more or less unlike conceptions are at one time or other presented to us. Let us look at them in succession.

[1] *Catechism*, p. 129. [2] Bastian (A.), *Africanische Reisen*, p. 85.
[3] Torquemada (Juan de), *Monarquia Indiana*, bk. ix. ch.11–13.

By M. Comte himself, at page 74 of the *Catechism of Positive Religion*, we are told that we must —

> define Humanity as the *whole* of human beings, past, present, and future. The word *whole* points out clearly that you must not take in all men, but those only who are really capable of assimilation, in virtue of a real co-operation on their part in furthering the common good.

On which the first comment suggesting itself is that the word '*whole* points out clearly' not limitation, but absence of limitation. Passing over this, however, and agreeing to exclude, as is intended, criminals, pauper, beggars, and all who 'remain in the parasitic state,' it seems that we are to include in the aggregate object of our worship all who have aided, now aid, and will hereafter aid, social growth and development. Though elsewhere [1] it is limited to those who 'co-operate willingly,' yet since 'the animals which voluntarily aid man' are recognized as 'integral portions of the Great Being,' and since the co-operation of slaves is as 'voluntary' as that of horses, we seem compelled to include, not the superior men and classes only, but even those who, under a coercion such as is used to domestic animals, have helped to subdue the Earth and further the material progress of Humanity. And since the progress of Humanity has been largely aided by the spread of the higher races and accompanying extermination of the lower races, we must comprehend in our conception of this worshipful 'Great Being' all those who, from the earliest savage times, have, as leading warriors and common

[1] *Positive Polity*, vol. iv. pp. 27, 33.

soldiers, helped by their victories to replace inferior societies by superior ones: not only bloodthirsty conquerors like Sesostris (who is duly sanctified in the calendar), but even such cannibals as the Aztecs, who laid the basis of the Mexican civilization.

So far from seeing in the 'Great Being Humanity,' as thus defined, anything worshipful, it seems to me that contemplation of it is calculated to excite feelings which it is best to keep out of consciousness.

But now, not to take the doctrine at a disadvantage, let us conceive the object of the Positivist's adoration under a better aspect. Let us consider what claims to godhood may be made for the Humanity immediately known to us. Unquestionably M. Comte's own doctrine, that there has been going on an evolution of mankind, implies that such portion of the 'Great Being Humanity' as is formed by our own generation, is better than the average of those portions which have heretofore lived and died. What then shall we say of this better portion?

Of course we must keep out of thought all the bad conduct going on around — the prevailing dishonesty shown in adulteration by retailers and production of debased goods by manufacturers, the inefficient and dawdling work of artisans, the many fraudulent transactions of which a few are daily disclosed at trials; though why we are to exclude the blameworthy from our conception of Humanity, I do not understand. But not dwelling on this, let us contemplate first the intellectual traits, and then the

moral traits, of the people who remain after leaving out the worse.

Those whose mental appetites are daily satisfied by table talk almost wholly personal, by gossiping books and novels, and by newspapers, the contents of which are usually enjoyed the more in proportion as there is in them much of the scandalous or the horrible — those who on Sundays, never working out their own beliefs, receive the weekly dole of thought called for by their state of spiritual pauperism — those who, to the ideas they received during education, add only such as are supplied by daily journals and weekly sermons, with now and then a few from books, having none of their own worth speaking of; we may be content to class as respectable in the conventional sense, though scarcely in any higher sense — still less to include them as chief components in a body exciting reverence. Even if we limit attention to those of highest culture, including all who are concerned in regulative functions, political, ecclesiastical, educational, or other, the displays of intelligence do not call forth such an emotion as that which M. Comte's theory requires us to entertain. What shall we say of the wisdom of those, including nearly all who occupy influential positions, who persist in thinking that preparation for successful and complete living (which is the purpose of rational education) is best effected by learning to speak and write after the manner of two extinct peoples, and by gaining knowledge of their chief men, their superstitions, their deeds of war, etc. — who, in their leading

school, devote two hours per week to getting some ideas about the constitution of the world they are born into, and thirty-six hours per week to construing Latin and Greek and making verses, of small sense or none; and who, in the competitive examinations they devise, give to knowledge of words double the number of marks which they give to knowledge of things? That, it seems to me, is not a very worshipful degree of intelligence which fails to recognize the obvious truth that there is an Order of Nature, pervading alike the actions going on within us and without us, to which, from moment to moment, our lives must conform under penalty of one or other evil; and that therefore our first business must be to study this Order of Nature. Nor is estimation of this intelligence raised on contemplating the outcome of this established culture, as seen in Parliament; where any proposal to judge a question by reference to general laws, or 'abstract principles' as they are called, is pooh-poohed, with the tacit implication that in social affairs there is no natural law; and where, as we lately saw, 300 select spokesmen of the nation cheered frantically when it was decided that they should continue to vow before God that they would maintain certain arrangements prescribed for them by their great, great, etc. grandfathers.

On turning to the moral manifestations, we find still less that is calculated to excite the required religious feeling. When multitudes of citizens belonging to the classes distinguished as the better, make a hero of a politician whose sole aim throughout life

was success, regardless of principle, and have even established an annual commemoration of him, we are obliged to infer that the prevailing sentiments are not of a very high order. Nothing approaching to adoration is called forth by those who, on the death of a youth who went to help in killing Zulus, with whom he had no quarrel, and all that he might increase his chance of playing despot over the French, thought him worthy of high funeral honors — would, many of them, indeed, have given him the highest. No feeling of reverence arises in one's mind on thinking of people who looked on with approval or tolerance when a sailor of fortune, who has hired himself out to an eastern tyrant to slay at the word of command, was honored here by a banquet. A public opinion which recognizes no criminality in wholesale homicide, so long as it is committed by a constituted political authority, no matter how vile, or by its foreign hired agent, is a public opinion which excites, in some at any rate, an emotion nearer to contempt than to adoration.

This emotion is not changed on looking abroad and contemplating the implied natures of those who guide, and the implied natures of those who accept the guidance. When, among a people professing that religion of peace preached to them generation after generation by tens of thousands of priests, an assembly receives with enthusiasm, as lately at the Gambetta dinner, the toast, 'The French army, the highest embodiment of the French nation' — when, along with nominal acceptance of forgiveness as a Christian duty,

there goes intense determination to retaliate; we are obliged to reprobate either the feeling which they actually think proper, or the hypocrisy with which they profess that the opposite feeling is proper. On finding in another advanced society that the seats of highest culture are the seats of discipline in barbarism, where the test of manhood is the giving and taking of wounds in fights arising from trivial causes or none at all, and where, last year, a single day witnessed twenty-one such encounters in one university; we are reminded more of North American Indians, among whom tortures constitute the initiation of young men, than of civilized people taught for a thousand years to do good even to enemies. Or when we see, as lately in a nation akin to the last, that an officer who declined to break at once the law of his country and the law of his religion by fighting a duel was expelled the army; we are obliged to admit that profession of a creed which forbids revenge, by those whose deeds emphatically assert revenge to be a duty (almost as emphatically as do the lowest races of men), presents Humanity under an aspect not at all of the kind which we look for in 'the adorable Great Being.' Not reverence, not admiration, scarcely even respect, is caused by the sight of a hundred million Pagans masquerading as Christians.

I am told that by certain of M. Comte's disciples (though not by those Mr. Harrison represents) prayer is addressed to 'holy Humanity.' Had I to choose an epithet, I think 'holy' is about the last which would occur to me.

'But it is only the select human beings — those more especially who are sanctified in the Comtist calendar — who are to form the object of worship; and, for the worship of such, there is the reason that they are the benefactors to whom we owe everything.'

On the first of these statements, made by some adherents of M. Comte, one remark must be that it is at variance with M. Comte's own definition of the object of worship, as quoted above; and another remark must be that, admitting such select persons to be worshipful (and I do not admit it), there is no more reason for worshipping Humanity as a whole on the strength of these best samples, than there is for worshipping an ordinary individual, or even a criminal, on the strength of the few good actions which qualified the multitudinous indifferent actions and bad actions he committed. The second of these statements, that Humanity, either as the whole defined by M. Comte or as represented by these select persons, must be adored as being the producer of everything which civilization has brought us, and in a measure, even the creator of our higher powers of thought and action, we will now consider. Let us hear M. Comte himself on this point: —

> Thus each step of sound training in positive thought awakens perpetual feelings of veneration and gratitude; which rise often into enthusiastic admiration of the Great Being, who is the Author of all these conquests, be they in thought, or be they in action.[1]

What may have been the conceptions of 'venera-

[1] *System of Positive Polity*, vol. ii. p. 45.

tion and gratitude' entertained by M. Comte, we cannot, of course, say; but if anyone not a disciple will examine his consciousness, he will, I think, quickly perceive that veneration or gratitude felt towards any being, implies belief in the conscious action of that being — implies ascription of a prompting motive of a high kind, and deeds resulting from it: gratitude cannot be entertained towards something which is unconscious. So that the 'Great Being Humanity' must be conceived as having in its incorporated form, ideas, feelings, and volitions. Naturally there follows the inquiry — 'Where is its seat of consciousness?' Is it diffused throughout mankind at large? That cannot be; for consciousness is an organized combination of mental states, implying instantaneous communications such as certainly do not exist throughout Humanity. Where, then, must be its centre of consciousness? In France, of course, which, in the Comtean system, is to be the leading State; and naturally in Paris, to which all the major axes of the temples of Humanity are to point. Anyone with adequate humor might raise amusing questions respecting the constitution of that consciousness of the Great Being supposed to be thus localized. But, preserving our gravity, we have simply to recognize the obvious truth that Humanity has no corporate consciousness whatever. Consciousness, known to each as existing in himself, is ascribed by him to other beings like himself, and, in a measure, to inferior beings; and there is not the slightest reason for supposing that there ever was, is now, or

ever will be, any consciousness among men save that which exists in them individually. If, then, 'the Great Being, who is the Author of all these conquests,' is unconscious, the emotions of veneration and gratitude are absolutely irrelevant.

It will doubtless seem a paradox to say that human evolution with all its marvels, is to be credited neither to Humanity as an aggregate, nor to its component individuals; but the paradox will not be difficult to justify: especially if we set out with some analogies. An apt one is supplied by that 'thing of beauty,' the *Euplectella* or 'Venus' flower-basket,' now not uncommon as a drawing-room ornament. This fragile piece of animal architecture is not a product of any conscious creature, or of any combination of conscious creatures. It is the framework unknowingly elaborated by innumerable ciliated monads —each a simple nucleated cell, with a whip-like appendage which serves, by its waving movements, to aid the drawing in and sending out of sea-water, from which nutritive matter is obtained; and it is simply by the proclivities which these monads have towards certain modes of growth and secretion, that they form, without the consciousness of any one, or of all, this complicated city they inhabit. Again, take the case of a coral island. By it we are shown that a multitude of insignificant individuals may, by their separate actions carried on without concert, generate a structure imposing by its size and stability. One of these palm-covered atolls standing up out of vast depths in the Pacific, has been slowly built up

by coral-polyps, while, through successive small stages, the ocean-bottom has subsided. The mass produced by these brainless and almost nerveless animals — each by its tentacles slowly drawing in such food as the water occasionally brings, and at intervals budding out, plant-like, a new individual — is a mass exceeding in vastness any built by men, and defies the waves in a way which their best breakwaters fail to do: the whole structure being entirely undesigned, and, indeed, absolutely unknown to its producers, individually or in their aggregate.

Prepared by these analogies, every one will see what is meant by the paradox that civilization, whether contemplated in its great organized societies or in their material and mental products, can be credited neither to any ideal 'Great Being Humanity,' nor to the real beings summed up under that abstract name. Though we cannot in this case say that neither the aggregate nor its units have had any consciousness of the results wrought out, yet we may say that only after considerable advances of civilization has this consciousness existed on the part of a few. Communities have grown and organized themselves through the attainments of private ends, pursued with entire selfishness, and in utter ignorance of any social effects produced. If we begin with those early stages in which, among hostile tribes, one more numerous or better led than the rest, conquers them, and, consolidating them into a larger society, at the same time stops inter-tribal wars: we are shown that this step in advance is made, not only without thought of any

advantage to Humanity, but often under the promptings of the basest motives in the mind of the most atrocious savage. And so onwards. It needs but to glance at such wall-paintings as those of the conquering Seti at Karnak, or to read the inscriptions in which Assyrian kings proudly narrated their great deeds, to see that personal ambitions were pursued with absolute disregard of human welfare. But for that admiration of military glory with which classical culture imbues each rising generation, it would be felt that whatever benefits these kings unknowingly wrought, their self-praising records have brought them not much more honor than has been brought to the Fijian chief Ra Undreundre by the row of nine hundred stones recording the number of victims he devoured. And though these struggles for supremacy in which, during European history, so many millions have been sacrificed, resulted in the formation of great nations fitted for the highest types of structure; yet when, hereafter, opinion is no longer swayed by public school ethics, it will be seen that the men who effected these unions did so from desires which should class them with criminals rather than with the benefactors of mankind. With government organizations it was the same as with social consolidations: they arose not to secure the blessings of order, but to maintain the ruler's power. As the original motive for preventing quarrels among soldiers was that the army might not be rendered inefficient before the enemy: so, throughout the militant society at large, the motive for suppressing conflicts was partly that

of preventing hindrance to the king's wars, and partly that of asserting his authority. Administration of justice, as we know it, grew up incidentally; and began with bribing the ruling man to interfere on behalf of the complaint. Not wishes for the public weal, but wishes for private profit and power, originated the regulative organizations of societies. So has it been, too, with their industrial organizations. Acts of barter between primitive men were not prompted by thoughts of benefits to Humanity, to be eventually achieved by division of labor. When, as among various peoples, on occasions of assembling to make sacrifices at sacred places, some of the devotees took with them commodities likely to be wanted by others who would be there, and from whom needful supplies could be got in exchange, they never dreamed that they were making the first steps towards establishment of fairs, and eventually of markets: purely selfish desires prompted them. Nor on the part of the pedlars who, supplying themselves wholesale at these gatherings, travelled about selling retail, was there any beneficent intention of initiating that vast and elaborate distributing system which now exists. Neither they nor any men of their time had imagined such a system. And the like holds of improved arts, of inventions, and, in large measure, of discoveries. It was not philanthropy which prompted the clearing of wild lands for the purpose of growing food; it was not philanthropy which little by little improved the breeds of animals, and adapted them to human use; it was not philanthropy which in course of time changed

the primitive plough into the finished modern plough. Wishes for private satisfactions were the exclusive stimuli. The successive patents taken out by Watt, and his law-suits in defence of them, show that though he doubtless foresaw some of the benefits which the steam-engine would confer on mankind, yet foresight of these was not the prime mover of his acts. The long concealment of the method of fluxions by Newton, as well as the Newton-Leibnitz controversy which subsequently arose, shows us that while there was perception of the benefits to science, and indirectly to Humanity, from the discoveries made by these mathematicians, yet that desires to confer these benefits were secondary to other desires — largely the love of scientific exploration itself, and, in a considerable degree, 'the last infirmity of noble minds.' Nor has it been otherwise with literature. Entirely dissenting, though I do, from the dictum of Johnson, that 'no man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money,' and knowing perfectly well that many books have been written by others than blockheads not only without expectation of profit, but with the certainty of loss; yet I hold it clear that the majority of authors do not differ from their fellow men to the extent that the desire to confer public benefit predominates over the desire to reap private benefit: in the shape of satisfied ambition if not in the shape of pecuniary return. And it is the same with the delights given to mankind by artistic products. The mind of the artist, whether composer, painter, or sculptor, has always been in a much

greater degree occupied by the pleasure of creation and the thought of reward, material or mental, than by the wish to add to men's gratifications.

But we are most clearly shown how little either any aims of an ideal 'Great Being,' or any philanthropic aims of individuals, have had to do with civilization, by an instance which M. Comte himself refers to as proving our indebtedness. He says:— 'Language alone might suffice to recall to the mind of every one, how completely every creation of man is the result of a vast combination of efforts, equally extended over time and space.'[1] Now nothing is more manifest than that language has been produced neither by the conscious efforts of the imagined 'Great Being, who is the Author of all these conquests,' nor by the conscious efforts of individual men. Passing over that intentional coining of words which occurs during the later stages of linguistic progress, it is undeniable that during those earlier stages which gave to languages their essential structures and vocabularies, the evolutionary process went on without the intention of those who were instrumental to it. The man who first, when discussing a probability, said *give* (i.e. grant, or admit) so-and-so, and such and such follows, had no idea that by his metaphorical *give* (which became *gif*, and then *if*) he was helping to initiate a grammatical form. The original application of the word *orange* to some object like an orange in color, was made without consciousness that the act would presently lead to enrichment

[1] *Positive Polity*, vol. ii. p. 48.

of the language by an additional adjective. And so throughout. The minute additions and modifications which have, in thousands of years, given to human speech its present perfection, arose as random changes without thought of improvement; and the good ones insensibly spread as serving better the purposes of those who adopted them.

Thus, accepting M. Comte's typical instance of the obligations under which Humanity during the past has placed individuals at present, we must say that language, having been evolved during men's intercourse without the least design on their parts of conferring benefits, and without the faintest consciousness of what they were doing, affords no reason whatever for regarding them with that 'veneration and gratitude' which he thinks due.

'But surely "veneration and gratitude" are due somewhere. Surely civilized society, with its complex arrangements and involved processes, its multitudinous material products and almost magical instruments, its language, science, literature, art, must be credited to some agency or other. If the "Great Being Humanity," considered as a whole, has not created it for us — if the individuals who have co-operated in producing it have done so while pursuing their private ends, mostly without consciousness that they were either furthering or hindering human progress, how happens it that such benefits have been achieved, and to what shall we attribute achievement of them?'

To Mr. Harrison, if his allegiance to his master is unqualified, no answer which he will think satisfactory can be given; for M. Comte negatives the recognition of any cause for the existence of human beings and the 'Great Being' composed of them. It was one of his strange inconsistencies that, though he held it legitimate to inquire into the evolution of the Solar System (as is shown by his acceptance of the nebular hypothesis), and though he treats of human society as a product of evolution, yet all that region lying between the formation of planets and the origin of primitive man, was ignored by him. To those, however, who accept the doctrine of organic evolution, either with or without the doctrine of evolution at large, the obvious answer to the above question will be that if 'veneration and gratitude' are due at all, they are due to that Ultimate Cause from which Humanity, individually and as a whole, in common with all other things, has proceeded. There is nothing in embodied Humanity but what results from the properties of its units — properties mainly pre-historic, and in a small measure generated by social life. If we ask whence come these properties — these structures and functions, bodily and mental — we must go for our answer to the slow operation of those processes of modification and complication through which, with the aid of surrounding conditions, ever themselves growing more involved, there have been produced the multitudinous organic types, up to the highest. If we persist in putting question beyond question, we are carried back to those more general

causes which determined the structure and composition of the Earth during its concentration; and eventually we are carried back to the nebulous mass in which there existed, undistinguished into those concrete forms we now know, the forces out of which all things contained in the Solar System have come, and in which there must have been, as Professor Tyndall expresses it, 'the promise and potency of all terrestrial life.' Whether we contemplate such external changes as those of stars moving ten miles per second, and those which now in hours, now in years, now in centuries, arrange molecules into a crystal; or whether we contemplate internal changes, arising in us as ideas and feelings, and arising also in the chick which but a few weeks since was a viscid yelk, we are compelled to recognize everywhere an Energy capable of all forms, and which has been ever assuming new forms, from the remotest time to which science carries us back, down to the passing moment. If we take the highest product of evolution, civilized human society, and ask to what agency all its marvels must be credited, the inevitable answer is — To that Unknown Cause of which the entire Cosmos is a manifestation.

A spectator who, seeing a bubble floating on a great river, had his attention so absorbed by the bubble that he ignored the river — nay, even ridiculed any one who thought that the river out of which the bubble arose and into which it would presently lapse, deserved recognition — would fitly typify a disciple of M. Comte, who, centring all his higher sentiments

on Humanity, holds it absurd to let either thought or feeling be occupied with that great stream of Creative Power, unlimited in Space or in Time, of which Humanity is a transitory product. Even if, instead of being the dull leaden-hued thing it is, the bubble Humanity had reached that stage of iridescence of which, happily, a high sample of man or woman sometimes shows us a beginning, it would still owe whatever there was in it of beauty to that Infinite and Eternal Energy out of which Humanity has quite recently emerged, and into which it must, in course of time, subside. And to suppose that this relatively-evanescent form of existence ought to occupy our minds so exclusively as to leave no space for a consciousness of that Ultimate Existence of which it is but one form out of multitudes — an Ultimate Existence which was manifested in infinitely-varied ways before Humanity arose, and will be manifested in infinitely-varied other ways when Humanity has ceased to be, seems very strange — to me, indeed, amazing.

And here this contrast between the positivist view and my own view, equally marked now as it was at first, leads me to ask in what respect the criticisms passed on the article — 'Religion: a Retrospect and Prospect,' have affected its argument. Many years ago, as also by implication in that article, I contended that while Science shows that we can know phenomena only, its arguments involve no denial of an Existence beyond phenomena. In common with leading scientific men whose opinions are known to me, I hold that it does not bring us to an ultimate

negation, as the presentations of my view made by Mr. Harrison and Sir James Stephen imply; and they have done nothing to show that its outcome is negative. Contrariwise, the thesis originally maintained by me against thinkers classed as orthodox,[1] and reasserted after this long interval, is that though the nature of the Reality transcending appearances cannot be known, yet that its existence is necessarily implied by all we do know — that though no conception of this Reality can be framed by us, yet that an indestructible consciousness of it is the very basis of our intelligence;[2] and I do not find, either in Mr. Harrison's criticisms or in those of Sir James Stephen, any endeavor to prove the untruth of this thesis. Moreover, as at first elaborated and as lately repeated, my argument was that in the discovery by Science that it could not do more than ascertain the order among phenomena, there was involved a tacit confession of impotence in presence of the Mystery of Things — a confession which brought Science into sympathy with Religion; and that in their joint recognition of an Unknowable Cause for all the effects constituting the knowable world, Religion and Science would reach a truth common to the two. I do not see that anything said by my critics has shaken this position. I held at the outset, and continue to hold, that this Inscrutable Existence which Science,

[1] *First Principles*, § 26.

[2] Sir James Stephen, who appears perplexed by the distinction between a conception and a consciousness, will find an explanation of it in *First Principles*, § 26.

in the last resort, is compelled to recognize as unreached by its deepest analyses of matter, motion, thought, and feeling, stands towards our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the Creative Power asserted by Theology; and that when Theology, which has already dropped many of the anthropomorphic traits ascribed, eventually drops the last of them, the foundation-beliefs of the two must become identical. So far as I see, no endeavor has been made to show that this is not the case. Further, I have contended, originally and in the article named, that this Reality transcending appearance (which is not simply unknown, as Mr. Harrison thinks it should be called, but is proved by analysis of the forms of our intelligence to be unknowable),[1] standing towards the Universe and towards ourselves in the same relation as an anthropomorphic Creator was supposed to stand, bears a like relation with it not only to human thought but to human feeling: the gradual replacement of a Power allied to humanity in certain traits, by a Power which we cannot say is thus allied, leaves unchanged certain of the sentiments comprehended under the name religious. Though I have argued that in ascribing to the Unknowable Cause of things such human attributes as emotion, will, and intelligence, we are using words which, when thus applied, have no corresponding ideas; yet I have also argued that we are just as much debarred from denying as we are from affirming such attributes;[2] since, as ultimate analy-

[1] *First Principles*, Part I. chapter iv.
[2] *First Principles*, § 31.

sis brings us everywhere to alternative impossibilities of thought, we are shown that beyond the phenomenal order of things, our ideas of possible and impossible are irrelevant. Nothing has been said which requires me to change this view: neither Mr. Harrison's statement that 'to make a religion out of the Unknowable is far more extravagant than to make it out of the Equator,' nor Sir James Stephen's description of the Unknowable as 'like a gigantic soap-bubble not burst but blown thinner and thinner till it has become absolutely imperceptible,' seems to me applicable. One who says that because the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed, cannot in any way be brought within the limits of human consciousness, it therefore approaches to a nonentity, seems to me like one who says of a vast number that because it passes all possibility of enumeration it is like nothing, which is also innumerable. Once more, when implying that the Infinite and Eternal Energy manifested alike within us and without us, and to which we must ascribe not only the manifestations themselves but the law of their order, will hereafter continue to be, under its transfigured form, an object of religious sentiment; I have implied that whatever components of this sentiment disappear, there must ever survive those which are appropriate to the consciousness of a Mystery that cannot be fathomed and a Power that is omnipresent. Mr. Harrison and Sir James Stephen have said nothing to invalidate this position. Lastly, let me point out that I am not concerned to show what effect religious sentiment, as

hereafter thus modified, will have as a moral agent; though Mr. Harrison, by ridiculing the supposition that it will 'make good men and women,' seems to imply that I have argued, or am bound to argue, that it will do this. If he will refer to the *Data of Ethics* and other books of mine, he will find that modifications of human nature, past and future, I ascribe in the main to the continuous operations of surrounding social conditions and entailed habits of life; though past forms of the religious consciousness have exercised, and future forms will I believe exercise, co-operative influences.[1]

How, then, does the case stand? Under 'Retrospect,' I aimed to show how the religious consciousness arose; and under 'Prospect,' what *of this consciousness* must remain when criticism has done its utmost. My opponents would have succeeded had they shown (1) that it did not arise as alleged; or (2) that some other consciousness would remain; or (3) that no consciousness would remain. They have done none of these things. Looking at the general results, it seems to me that while the things I have said have not been disproved, the things which have been disproved are things I have not said.

HERBERT SPENCER.

[1] *Data of Ethics*, § 62.

AGNOSTIC METAPHYSICS.

TEN years ago I warned Mr. Herbert Spencer that his religion of the Unknowable was certain to lead him into strange company. 'To invoke the Unknowable,' I said, 'is to re-open the whole range of Metaphysics; and the entire apparatus of Theology will follow through the breach.' I quoted Mr. G. Lewes's admirable remark,[1] 'that the foundations of a creed can rest only on the Known and the Knowable.' We see the result. Mr. Spencer has developed his Unknowable into an 'Infinite and Eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained.' He has discovered it to be the Ultimate Cause, the All-Being, the Creative Power, and all the other 'alternative impossibilities of thought' which he once cast in the teeth of the older theologies. Naturally there is joy over one philosopher that repenteth. The *Christian World* claims this as equivalent to the assertion that God is the mind and spirit of the universe; and the *Christian World* says these words might have been used by Butler or Paley.[2]

[1] *Problems of Life and Mind*, vol. i. Preface.

[2] *The Christian World*, June 5 and July 3, 1884.

This is, indeed, very true; but it is strange to find the philosophy of one who makes it a point of conscience not to enter a church described as 'the fitting and natural introduction to inspiration!'

The admirers of Mr. Spencer's genius — and I count myself amongst the earliest — will not regret that he has been induced to lay aside his vast task of philosophic synthesis, in order more fully to explain his views about Religion. This is, indeed, for the thoughtful, as well as the practical world, the great question of our age, and the discussion that was started by his paper[1] and by mine[2] has opened many topics of general interest. Mr. Spencer has been led to give to some of his views a certainly new development, and he has treated of matters which he had not previously touched. Various critics have joined the debate. Sir James Stephen[3] has brought into play his Nasmyth hammer of Common Sense, and has asked the bold and truly characteristic question: 'Can we not do just as well without any religion at all?' The weekly Reviews, I am told, have been poking at us their somewhat hebdomadal fun. And then Mr. Wilfrid Ward,[4] 'the rising hope of the stern and unbending' Papists, steps in to remind us of the ancient maxim — *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus.*

I cannot altogether agree with a friend who tells me that controversy is pure evil. It is not so when

[1] H. Spencer, in *Nineteenth Century*, January and July, 1884.
[2] F. Harrison, in *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1884.
[3] Sir J. Stephen, in *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1884.
[4] W. Ward, in *National Review*, June, 1884.

it leads to a closer sifting of important doctrines; when it is inspired with friendly feeling, and has no other object than to arrive at the truth. There were no mere 'compliments' in my expressions of respect for Mr. Spencer and his work. I habitually speak of him as the only living Englishmen who can fairly lay claim to the name of philosopher; nay, he is, I believe, the only man in Europe now living who has constructed a real system of philosophy. Very much in that philosophy I willingly adopt; as a philosophical theory I accept his idea of the Unknowable. My rejection of it as the basis of Religion is no new thing. The substance of my essay on the 'Ghost of Religion' I have long ago taught at Newton Hall. The difference between Mr. Spencer and myself as to what religion means is vital and profound. So deep is it that it justifies me in returning to these questions, and still further disturbing his philosophic labor. But our long friendship I trust will survive the inevitable dispute.

It will clear up much at issue between us if it be remembered that to me this question is one primarily of religion; to Mr. Spencer, one primarily of philosophy. He is dealing with transcendental conceptions, intelligible only to certain trained metaphysicians: I have been dealing with religion as it affects the lives of men and women in the world. Hence, if I admit with him that philosophy points to an unknowable and inconceivable Reality behind phenomena, I insist that, to ordinary men and women, an unknowable and inconceivable Reality is practically

an Unreality. The Everlasting Yes which the Evolutionist metaphysician is conscious of, but cannot conceive, is in effect on the public a mere Everlasting No; and a religion which begins and ends with the mystery of the Unknowable is not religion at all, but a mere logician's formula. This is how it comes about that Mr. Spencer complains that I have misunderstood him or have not read his books, that I fail to represent him, or even misrepresent him. I cannot admit that I have either misunderstood him or misrepresented him on any single point. I have studied his books part by part and chapter by chapter, and have examined the authorities on which he relies.

He seems to think that all hesitation to accept his views will disappear if men will only turn to his *First Principles*, his *Principles of Sociology* and his *Descriptive Sociology*, where he has 'proved' this and 'disproved' that, and arrayed the arguments and the evidence for every doctrine in turn. Now, for my part, I have studied all this to my great pleasure and profit, since the first number of *A Synthetic Philosophy* appeared. Mr. Spencer objects to discipleship, or I would say that I am in very many things one of his disciples myself. But in this matter of religion I hold still, as I have held from the first, that Mr. Spencer is mistaken as to the history, the nature, and the function of religion. It is quite true that he and I are at opposite poles in what relates to the work of religion on man and on life. In all he has written, he treats religion as mainly a thing of the mind,

and concerned essentially with mystery. I say — and here I am on my own ground — that religion is mainly a thing of feeling and of conduct, and is concerned essentially with duty. I agree that religion has also an intellectual base; but here I insist that this intellectual basis must rest on something that can be known and conceived and at least partly understood; and that it cannot be found at all in what is unknowable, inconceivable, and in no way whatever to be understood.

Now, in maintaining this, I have with me almost the whole of the competent minds which have dealt with this question. Mr. Spencer puts it rather as if it were merely fanaticism on my part which prevents me from accepting his theory of Religion; as if Sir James Stephen's difficulties would disappear if he could be induced to read the *Principles of Sociology* and the rest. Mr. Spencer must remember that in his Religion of the Unknowable he stands almost alone. He is, in fact, insisting to mankind, in a matter where all men have some opinion, on one of the most gigantic paradoxes in the history of thought. I know myself of no single thinker in Europe who has come forward to support this religion of an Unknowable Cause, which cannot be presented in terms of consciousness, to which the words emotion, will, intelligence cannot be applied with any meaning, and yet which stands in the place of a supposed anthropomorphic Creator. Mr. George H. Lewes, who of all modern philosophers was the closest to Mr. Spencer, and of recent English philosophers the most

nearly his equal, wrote ten years ago: — 'Deeply as we may feel the mystery of the universe and the limitations of our faculties, *the foundations of a creed can only rest on the Known and the Knowable.*' With that I believe every school of thought but a few dreamy mystics have agreed. Every religious teacher, movement, or body, has equally started from that. For myself, I feel that I stand alongside of the religious spirits of every time and of every church in claiming for religion some intelligible object of reverence, and the field of feeling and of conduct, as well as that of awe. Every notice of my criticism of Mr. Spencer which has fallen under my eye adopted my view of the hollowness of the Unknowable as a basis of Religion. So say Agnostics, Materialists, Sceptics, Christians, Catholics, Theists, and Positivists. All with one consent disclaim making a Religion of the Unknowable. Mr. Herbert Spencer may construct an Athanasian Creed of the 'Inscrutable Existence' — which is neither God nor being — but he stands as yet *Athanasius contra mundum.* It is not, therefore, through the hardness of my heart and the stiffness of my neck that I cannot follow him here.

Let us now sum up the various positions which Mr. Spencer would impose on us as to Religion. After his two articles and the recent discussion we can hardly mistake him, and they justify my saying that they form a gigantic paradox. Mr. Spencer maintains that: —

1. The proper object of Religion is a Something

which can never be known, or conceived, or understood; to which we cannot apply the terms emotion, will, intelligence; of which we cannot affirm or deny that it is either person, or being, or mind, or matter, or indeed anything else.

2. All that we can say of it is, that it is an Inscrutable Existence or an Unknowable Cause: we can neither know nor conceive what it is, nor how it came about, nor how it operates. It is, notwithstanding, the Ultimate Cause, the All-Being, the Creative Power.

3. The essential business of Religion, so understood, is to keep alive the consciousness of a mystery that cannot be fathomed.

4. We are not concerned with the question, 'What effect this religion will have as a moral agent?' or, 'Whether it will make good men and women?' Religion has to do with mystery, not with morals.

These are the paradoxes to which my fanaticism refuses to assent.

Now these were the views about Religion which I found in Mr. Spencer's first article, and they certainly are repeated in his second. He says:—'The Power which transcends phenomena cannot be brought within the forms of our finite thought.' 'The Ultimate Power is not representable in terms of human consciousness.' 'The attributes of personality cannot be conceived by us as attributes of the Unknown Cause of things.' 'The nature of the Reality transcending appearances cannot be known, yet its existence is necessarily implied.' 'No conception of this Reality can

be framed by us.' 'This Inscrutable Existence which Science, in the last resort, is compelled to recognize as unreached by its deepest analyses of matter, motion, thought, and feeling.' 'In ascribing to the Unknowable Cause of things such human attributes as emotion, will, intelligence, we are using words which, when thus applied, have no corresponding ideas.' There can be no kind of doubt about all this. I said Mr. Spencer proposes, as the object of religion, an abstraction which we cannot conceive, or present in thought, or regard as having personality, or as capable of feeling, purpose, or thought — in familiar words, I said it was 'a sort of a something, about which we can know nothing.'

Mr. Spencer complains that I called this Something a negaton, an All-Nothingness, an (x^n), and an Everlasting No. He now says that this Something is the All-Being. The Unknowable is the Ultimate Reality — the sole existence; — the entire Cosmos, as we are conscious of it, being a mere show. In familiar words: — Everything is nought, and the Unknowable is the only real Thing. I quite agree that this is Mr. Spencer's position as a metaphysician. It is not at all new to me, for it is worked out in his *First Principles* most distinctly. Ten years ago, when I reviewed Mr. Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind*, I criticised Mr. Spencer's Transfigured Realism as being too absolute.[1] I then stated my own philosophical position to be that, 'our scientific conceptions within have a good working correspondence with an (as-

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, 1874, p. 89.

sumed) reality without — we having no means of knowing whether the absolute correspondence between them be great or small, or whether there be any absolute correspondence at all.' To that I adhere; and, whilst I accept the doctrine of an Unknown substratum, I cannot assent to the doctrine that the Unknowable is the Absolute Reality. But I am quite aware that he holds it, nor have I ever said that he did not. On the contrary, I granted that it might be the first axiom of science or the universal postulate of philosophy. But it is not a religion.[1]

I said then, and I say still, speaking with regard to religion, and from the religious point of view, that the Metaphysician's Unknowable is tantamount to a Nothing. The philosopher may choose to say that there is an Ultimate Reality which we cannot conceive, or know, or liken to anything we do know. But these subtleties of speculation are utterly unintelligible to the ordinary public. And to tell them that they are to worship this Unknowable is equivalent to telling them to worship nothing. I quite agree that Mr. Spencer, or any metaphysician, is entitled to assert that the Unknowable is the sole Reality. But religion is not a matter for Metaphysicians — but for men, women, and children. And to them the Unknowable is Nothing. Sir James Stephen calls the distinctions of Mr. Spencer 'an

[1] My words were that, 'Although the Unknowable is logically said to be Something, yet the something of which we neither know nor conceive anything is practically nothing.' That is, speaking from the point of view of religion.

unmeaning play of words.' I do not say that they are unmeaning to the philosophers working on metaphysics. But to the public, seeking for a religion, the Reality or the Unreality of the Unknowable is certainly an unmeaning play of words.

Even supposing that Evolution ever could bring the people to comprehend the subtlety of the All-Being, of which all things we know are only shows, the Unknowable is still incapable of supplying the very elements of Religion. Mr. Spencer thinks otherwise. He says, that although we cannot know, or conceive it, or apply to it any of the terms of life, or of consciousness, 'it leaves unchanged certain of the sentiments comprehended under the name religion.' 'Whatever components of the religious sentiment disappear, there must ever survive those which are appropriate to the consciousness of a Mystery!' Certain of the religious sentiments are left unchanged! The consciousness of a Mystery is to survive! Is that all? 'We are not concerned,' says he, 'to know what effect this religious sentiment will have as a moral agent!' A religion without anything to be known, with nothing to teach, with no moral power, with some rags of religious sentiment surviving, mainly the consciousness of Mystery; this is, indeed, the mockery of Religion.

Forced, as it seems, to clothe the nakedness of the Unknowable with some shreds of sentiment, Mr. Spencer has given it a positive character, which for every step that it advances towards Religion recedes from sound Philosophy. The Unknowable was at

first spoken of as an 'unthinkable abstraction,' and so undoubtedly it is. But it finally emerges as the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate Cause, the All-Being, the Absolute Power, the Unknown Cause, the Inscrutable Existence, the Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed, the Creative Power, 'the Infinite and Eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained.' It is 'to stand in substantially the same relation towards our general conception of things as does the Creative Power asserted by Theology.' 'It stands towards the Universe, and towards ourselves, in the same relation as an anthropomorphic Creator was supposed to stand, bears a like relation with it not only to human thought but to human feeling.' In other words, the Unknowable *is* the Creator; subject to this, that we cannot assert or deny that he, she, or it, is Person, or Being, or can feel, think, or act, or do anything else that we can either know or imagine, or is such that we can ascribe to Him, Her, or It, anything whatever within the realm of consciousness.

Now the Unknowable, so qualified and explained, offends against all the canons of criticism, so admirably set forth in *First Principles*, and especially those of Dean Mansel, therein quoted and adopted. The Unknowable is not unknowable if we know that 'it creates and sustains all things.' One need not repeat all the metaphysical objections arrayed by Mr. Spencer himself against connecting the ideas of the Absolute, the Infinite, First Cause, and Creator with that of any one Power. How can Absolute

Power create? How can the Absolute be a Cause? The Absolute excludes the relative; and Creation and Cause both imply relation. How can the Infinite be a Cause, or create? For if there be effect distinct from cause, or if there be something uncreated, the infinite would be thereby limited. What is the meaning of All-Being? Does it include, or not, its own manifestation? If the Cosmos is a mere show of an Unknown Cause, then the Unknown Cause is not Infinite, for it does not include the Cosmos; and not Absolute, for the Universe is its manifestation, and all things proceed from it. That is to say, the Absolute is in relation to the Universe, as Cause and Effect. Again, if the 'very notions, beginning and end, cause and purpose, relative notions belonging to human thought, are probably irrelevant to the Ultimate Reality transcending human thought' (Spencer, *Nineteenth Century*, p. 12 [*ante*, p. 22]), how can we speak of the Ultimate Cause, or indeed of Infinite and Eternal? The philosophical difficulties of imagining a First Cause, so admirably put by Mr. Spencer years ago, are not greater than those of imagining an Ultimate Cause. The objections he states to the idea of Creation are not removed by talking of a Creative Power rather than a Creator God. If Mr. Spencer's new Creative Power 'stands towards our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as the Creative Power of Theology,' it is open to all the metaphysical dilemmas so admirably stated in *First Principles*. Mr. Spencer cannot have it both ways. If his Unknow-

able be the Creative Power and Ultimate Cause, it simply renews all the mystification of the old theologies. If his Unknowable be unknowable, then it is idle to talk of Infinite and Eternal Energy, sole Reality, All-Being, and Creative Power. This is the slip-slop of theologians which Mr. Spencer, as much as any man living, has finally torn to shreds.

In what way does the notion of Ultimate Cause avoid the difficulties in the way of First Cause, and how is Creative Power an idea more logical than Creator? And if, as Mr. Spencer says (*First Principles*, p. 35), 'the three different suppositions respecting the origin of things turn out to be literally unthinkable,' what does he mean by asserting that a Creative Power is the one great Reality? Mr. Spencer seems to suggest that, though all idea of First Cause, of Creator, of Absolute Existence is unthinkable, the difficulty in the way of predicating them of anything is got over by asserting that the unthinkable and the unknowable is the ultimate reality. He said (*First Principles*, p. 110), 'every supposition respecting the genesis of the Universe commits us to alternative impossibilities of thought;' and again, 'we are not permitted to know — nay, we are not even permitted to conceive — that Reality which is behind the veil of Appearance.' Quite so! On that ground we have long rested firmly, accepting Mr. Spencer's teaching. It is to violate that rule if we now go on to call it Creative Power, Ultimate Cause, and the rest. It comes then to this: Mr. Spencer says to the theologians, 'I cannot allow you to speak

of a First Cause, or a Creator, or an All-Being, or an Absolute Existence, because you mean something intelligible and conceivable by these terms, and I tell you that they stand for ideas that are unthinkable and inconceivable. But,' he adds, 'I have a perfect right to talk of an Ultimate Cause, and a Creative Power, and an Absolute Existence, and an All-Being, because I mean nothing by these terms — at least, nothing that can be either thought of or conceived of, and I know that I am not talking of anything intelligible or conceivable. That is the faith of an Agnostic, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.'

Beyond the region of the knowable and the conceivable we have no right to assume an infinite energy more than infinite series of energies, or an infinite series of infinite things or nothings. We have no right to assume one Ultimate Cause, or any cause, more than an infinite series of Causes, or something which is not Cause at all. We have no right to assume that anything beyond the knowable is eternal or infinite, or anything else; we have no right to assume that it is the Ultimate Reality. There may be an endless circle of Realities, or there may be no Reality at all. Once leave the region of the knowable and the conceivable, and every positive assertion is unwarranted. The forms of our consciousness prove to us, says Mr. Spencer, that what lies behind the region of consciousness is not merely unknown but unknowable, that it is one, and that it is Real. The laws of mind, I reply, do not hold good in the

region of the unthinkable; the forms of our consciousness cannot limit the Unknowable. All positive assertions about that 'which cannot be brought within the forms of our finite thought' are therefore unphilosophical. We have always held this of the theological Creation, and we must hold it equally of the evolutionist Creation. Here is the difference between Positive Philosophy and Agnostic Metaphysics.

But if this Realism of the Unknowable offends against sound philosophy, the Worship of the Unknowable is abhorrent to every instinct of genuine Religion. There is something startling in Mr. Spencer's assertion that he 'is not concerned to show what effect this religious sentiment will have as a moral agent.' As in *First Principles*, so now, he represents the business of Religion to be to keep alive the consciousness of a Mystery. The recognition of this supreme verity has been from the first, he says, the vital element of Religion. From the beginning it has dimly discerned this ultimate verity; and that supreme and ultimate verity is, that there is an inscrutable Mystery. If this be not retrogressive Religion, what is? Religion is not indeed to be discarded; but, in its final and perfect form, all that it ever has had of reverence, gratitude, love, and sympathy is to be shrivelled up into the recognition of a Mystery. Morality, duty, goodness are no longer to be within its sphere. It will neither touch the heart of men nor mould the conduct; it will perpetually remind the intelligence that there is a great

Enigma, which, it tells us, can never be solved. Not only is religion reduced to a purely mental sphere, but its task in that sphere is one practically imbecile.

Mr. Spencer complains that I called his Unknowable 'an ever-present conundrum to be everlastingly given up.' But he uses words almost exactly the same; he himself speaks of 'the Great Enigma which he (man) knows cannot be solved.' The business of the religious sentiment is with 'a consciousness of a Mystery that cannot be fathomed.' It would be difficult to find for Religion a lower and more idle part to play in human life than that of continually presenting to man a conundrum, which he is told he must continually give up. One would take all this to be a bit from *Alice in Wonderland* rather than the first chapter of *Synthetic Philosophy*.

I turn to some of the points on which Mr. Spencer thinks that I misunderstand or misrepresent his meaning. I cannot admit any one of these cases. In calling the Unknowable a pure negation, I spoke from the standpoint of Religion, not of Metaphysics. It may be a logical postulate, but that of which we can know nothing, and of which we can form no conception, I shall continue to call a pure negation, *as an object of worship*, even if I am told (as I now am) that it is 'that by which all things are created and sustained.' Such is the view of Sir James Stephen, and of every other critic who has joined in this discussion.

With respect to Dean Mansel I made no mistake;

the mistake is Mr. Spencer's — not mine. I said that of all modern theologians the Dean came the nearest to him. As we all know, in *First Principles* Mr. Spencer quotes and adopts four pages from Mansel's *Bampton Lectures*. But I said 'there is a gulf which separates even his all-negative *deity* from Mr. Spencer's impersonal, unconscious, unthinking, and unthinkable Energy.' Mr. Spencer says that I misrepresent him and transpose his doctrine and Mansel's, because he regards the Absolute as positive and the Dean regarded it as negative. If Mr. Spencer will look at my words again, he will see that I was speaking of Mansel's Theology, not of his Ontology. I said '*deity*,' not the Absolute. Mansel, as a metaphysician, no doubt spoke of the Absolute as negative, whilst Mr. Spencer speaks of it as positive. But Mansel's idea of deity is personal, whilst Mr. Spencer's Energy is not personal. That is strictly accurate. Dean Mansel's words are, 'it is our duty to think of God as personal;' Mr. Spencer's words are, 'duty requires us neither to affirm nor deny personality' of the Unknown Cause. That is to say, the Dean called his First Cause God; Mr. Spencer prefers to call it Energy. Both describe this First Cause negatively; but whilst the Dean calls it a Person, Mr. Spencer will not say that it is person, conscious, or thinking. Mr. Spencer's impression then that I misrepresented him in this matter is simply his own rather hasty reading of my words.

It is quite legitimate in a question of religion and an object of worship to speak of this Unknowable

Energy, described as Mr. Spencer describes it, as 'impersonal, unconscious, unthinking, and unthinkable.' The distinction that, since we neither affirm nor deny of it personality, consciousness, or thought, it is not therefore impersonal, is a metaphysical subtlety. That which cannot be presented in terms of human consciousness is neither personal, conscious, nor thinking, but properly unthinkable. To the ordinary mind it is a logical formula, it is apart from man, it is impersonal and unconscious. And to tell us that this conundrum is 'the power which manifests itself in consciousness,' that man and the world are but its products and manifestations, that it may have (for aught we know) something higher than personality and something grander than intelligence, is to talk theologico-metaphysical jargon, but it is not to give the average man and woman any positive idea at all, and certainly not a religious idea. In religion, at any rate, that which can only be described by negations is negative; that which cannot be presented in terms of consciousness is unconscious.

I shall say but little about Mr. Spencer's Ghost theory as the historical source of all religion; because it is, after all, a subordinate matter, and would lead to a wide digression. I am sorry that he will not accept my (not very serious) invitation to him to modify the paradoxes thereon to be read in his *Principles of Sociology*. I have always held it to be one of the most unlucky of all his sociologic doctrines, and that on psychological as well as on historical grounds. Mr. Spencer asserts that all forms of religious senti-

ment spring from the primitive idea of a disembodied double of a dead man. I assert that this is a rather complicated and developed form of thought; and that the simplest and earliest form of religious sentiment is the idea of the rudest savage, that visible objects around him — animal, vegetable, and inorganic — have quasi-human feelings and powers, which he regards with gratitude and awe. Mr. Spencer says that man only began to worship a river or a volcano when he began to imagine them as the abode of dead men's *spirits*. I say that he began to fear or adore them so soon as he thought the river or the volcano had the feelings and powers of living beings; and that was from the dawn of the human intelligence. The latter view is, I maintain, far the simpler and more obvious explanation; and it is a fault in logic to construct a complicated explanation when a simple one answers the facts. Animals think inert things of a peculiar form to be animal; so do infants. The dog barks at a shadow; the horse dreads a steam-engine; the baby loves her doll, feeds her, nurses her, and buries her. The savage thinks the river, or the mountain beside which he lives, the most beneficent, awful, powerful of beings. There is the germ of religion. To assure us that the savage has no feeling of awe and affection for the river and the mountain until he has evolved the elaborate idea of disembodied spirits of dead men dwelling invisibly inside them, is as idle as it would be to assure us that the love and the terror of the dog, the horse, and the baby are due to their perceiving some disembodied

spirit inside the shadow, the steam-engine, or the doll.

I think it a little hard that I may not hold this common-sense view of the matter, along with almost all who have studied the question, without being told that it comes of 'persistent thinking along defined grooves,' and that I should accept the Ghost theory of Religion were it not for my fanatical discipleship. Does not Mr. Spencer himself persistently think along defined grooves; and does not every systematic thinker do the same? But it so happens that the Ghost theory leads to conclusions that outrage common sense. If Dr. Tylor has finally adopted it, I am sorry. But it is certain that the believers in the Ghost theory as the origin of all forms of Religion are few and far between. The difficulties in the way of it are enormous. Mr. Spencer laboriously tries to persuade us that the worship of the Sun and the Moon arose, not from man's natural reverence for these great and beautiful powers of Nature, but solely as they were thought to be the abodes of the disembodied spirits of dead ancestors. Animal worship, tree and plant worship, fetichism, the Confucian worship of heaven, all, he would have us believe, take their origin entirely from the idea that these objects contain the spirits of the dead. If this is not 'persistent thinking along defined grooves,' I know not what it is.

The case of China is decisive. There we have a religion of vast antiquity and extent, perfectly clear and well ascertained. It rests entirely on worship

of Heaven, and Earth, and objects of Nature, regarded as organized beings, and not as the abode of human spirits. There is in the religion and philosophy of China no notion of human *spirits*, disembodied and detached from the dead person, conceived as living in objects and distinct from dead bodies. The dead are the dead; not the spiritual denizens of other things. In the face of this, the vague language of missionaries and travellers as to the beliefs of savages must be treated with caution. Mr. Spencer speaks in too confident language of his having 'proved' and 'disproved' and 'shown' all these things in his *Descriptive Sociology* and in his *Principles of Sociology*. How many competent persons has he convinced? Assuredly, for my part, I read and re-read all that he there says about the genesis of religion with amazement. We read these authorities for ourselves, and we cannot see that they bear out his conclusions. It was a pity to refer to the tables in the *Descriptive Sociology*, perhaps the least successful of all Mr. Spencer's works. That work is a huge file of cuttings from various travellers of all classes, extracted by three gentlemen whom Mr. Spencer employed. Of course these intelligent gentlemen had little difficulty in clipping from hundreds of books about foreign races sentences which seem to support Mr. Spencer's doctrines. The whole proceeding is too much like that of a famous lawyer who wrote a law-book, and then gave it to his pupils to find the 'cases' which supported his law. It is a little suspicious that we find so often at the head of

each 'superstition' of the lower races a heading in almost the same words to the effect: — 'Dreams, regarded as visits from the spirits of departed relations.' The intelligent gentlemen employed have done their work very well; but of course one can find in this medley of tables almost any view. And I find facts which make for my view as often as any other.

Fetichism, says Mr. Spencer, is not found in the lowest races. Be that as it may, it is found wherever we can trace the germs of religion. Well! I read in the *Descriptive Sociology* that Mr. Burton, perhaps the most capable of all African travellers, declares that 'fetichism is still the only faith known in East Africa.' In other places, we read of the sun and moon, forests, trees, stones, snakes, and the like regarded with religious reverence by the savages of Central Africa. 'The Damaras attribute the origin of the sheep to a large stone.' They regard a big tree as the origin of Damaras. 'Cattle of a certain color are venerated by the Damaras.' 'To the Bechuanas rain appears as the giver of all good.' 'The negro whips or throws away a worthless fetich.' 'The Hottentots and Bushmen shoot poisoned arrows at the lightning and throw old shoes at it.' Exactly! And do these Damaras, Bechuanas, and Bushmen do this solely because they think that the sun and moon, the lightning, the rain, the trees, the cattle, and the snakes are the abodes of the disembodied spirits of their dead relatives? And do they never do this until they have evolved a developed Ghost theory?

This is more than I can accept, for all the robustness of faith which Mr. Spencer attributes to me. Whilst I find in a hundred books that countless races of Africa and the organized religion of China attribute human *qualities* to natural objects, and grow up to regard those objects with veneration and awe, I shall continue to think that fetichism, or the reverent ascription of feeling and power to natural objects, is a spontaneous tendency of the human mind. And I shall refuse, even on Mr. Spencer's high authority, and that of his three compilers, to believe that it is solely a result of a developed *Ghost theory*. To ask us to believe this as 'proved' on the strength of a pile of clippings made to order is, I think, quite as droll to ordinary minds as anything Mr. Spencer can pick up out of the Positivist Calendar.

II.

I pass now to consider the fifteen pages of Mr. Spencer's article in which he attacks the writings of Auguste Comte. And I begin by pointing out that this was not at all the issue between us, so that this attack savors of the device known to lawyers as 'prejudice,' or 'abusing the plaintiff's attorney.' I gave reasons for thinking that the Unknowable could never be the foundation of a Creed. I added, in some twenty lines at most, that Humanity could be. Throughout my article I did not refer to Comte. My argument was entirely independent of any religious ordinances whatever, whether laid down by

Comte or any one else. Mr. Mill, in his work on Comte, has emphatically asserted that Humanity is an idea pre-eminently fitted to be the object of religion. And very many powerful minds agree with Mr. Mill so far, though they do not accept the organized form of religion as Auguste Comte conceived it. To what degree, and in what sense, I may accept it, is not doubtful; for I have striven for years past to make it known in my public utterances. But, until I put forward Auguste Comte as an infallible authority, until I preach or practise everything laid down in the *Positive Polity*, it is hardly an answer to me in a philosophical discussion to jest for the fiftieth time about Comte's arrogance, or about the banners to be used in the solemn processions, or about addressing prayer to 'holy' Humanity. My friends and I address no prayers to Humanity as 'holy' or otherwise; we use no banners, and we never speak of Comte as Mahometans speak of Mahomet, or as Buddhists speak of Buddha. For my own part, I am continually saying, and I say it deliberately now, that I look upon very much that Comte threw out for the future as tentative and purely Utopian. Since I have held this language for many years in public, I do not think that Mr. Spencer is justified in describing me as a blind devotee. And when he parries a criticism of his own philosophy, by ridiculing practices and opinions for which I have never made myself responsible, I hardly think he is acting with the candid mind which befits the philosopher in all things.

For this reason I shall not trouble myself about the 'eccentricities' which he thinks he can discover in the writings of Comte. A thousand eccentricities in Comte would not make it reasonable in Spencer to worship the Unknowable; and it would be hard indeed to match the eccentricity of venerating as the sole Reality that of which we only know that we can know nothing and imagine nothing. But there are other good reasons for declining to discuss with Mr. Spencer the writings of Comte. The first is that he knows nothing whatever about them. To Mr. Spencer the writings of Comte are, if not the Absolute Unknowable, at any rate the Absolute Unknown. I have long endeavored to persuade Mr. Spencer to study Comte, all the more as he owes to him so much indirectly through others. But, so far as I know, I have not induced him to do so. And his recent criticisms of these writings show the same thing. They add nothing, I may say, to the criticism contained in the work of Mr. Mill, or indeed to the obvious witticisms to be read any week in the *Saturday Review.* To turn over the pages of the *Positive Polity* and find many things which seem paradoxical is an exercise easy enough; but to grasp the conceptions of Comte, or indeed of any philosopher, seriously, is labor of a different kind.

Nothing is easier than to make cheap ridicule of any philosopher whatever. The philosopher necessarily works in a region of high abstraction, and largely employs the resources of deduction. He is bound by his office to deal freely with wide generaliza-

tions; and to follow his principles across all apparent obstacles. Every philosopher accordingly falls from time to time into astounding paradoxes; he is always accused by the superficial of arrogance; by the wits of absurdity; by the public of blindness. It is the fate of philosophers; and the charges, it must be allowed, are often founded in reason. Descartes, Hobbes, Leibnitz, Hegel, may in turn be attacked for certain hypotheses of theirs as the most arrogant of men and the wildest of sophists. How often has Mr. Spencer shared the same fate! There are those who think that no other living man has ever ventured on assertions at once so dogmatic and so paradoxical. I have too much respect for Mr. Spencer to quote any one of these wonderful bits of philosophic daring. I recognize in him a real philosopher of a certain order, and I seek to understand his system as a whole; nor am I dismayed in my studies by a thousand things in his theories, which certainly do seem to me very hard sayings. Mr. Spencer has himself just published a very remarkable work, 'the Man *versus* the State;' to which he hardly expects to make a convert except here and there, and about which an unfriendly critic might say that it might be entitled 'Mr. Spencer against All England.' I shall not certainly criticise him for that. But it is a signal instance of the isolated position assumed from time to time by philosophers. Philosophers who live, not so much in 'glass houses' as in very crystal palaces of their own imagination, of all people, one would think, should give up the

pastime of throwing stones at their neighbors' constructions.

I give an instance of the way in which Mr. Spencer misunderstands Comte. Mr. Spencer speaks of Comte's Historical Calendar as a 'canonization,' as a list of 'saints,' to be 'worshipped' day by day, as a means of 'regulating posterity,' and as part of the 'deification' of Humanity. And he further represents this list of historical names as a strictly classified selection of men in degree of personal merit. Now every part of this view is an error. So far from this calendar being permanently imposed on posterity, Comte himself speaks of it as provisional, to serve a temporary purpose. And what is that purpose? Why, to impress on the mind the general course of human civilization. Comte calls it 'a concrete view of man's history.' It is not meant to be a classification in real order of merit. It is not essentially personal at all. The names are given and always spoken of as 'types,' concrete embodiments of manifold elements in the civilization of the past. Over and over again Comte says that the type and its place are often chosen without reference to personal merit to represent a class, a nation, or a movement. They are not called, or treated of as 'saints.' There is no 'canonization,' no 'worship,' no ascription of perfection, or absolute merit of any kind. The whole scheme from beginning to end is, what Comte calls it, a concrete view of man's history, a mode of impressing on the minds of modern men what they owe in so many ways to men in the past.

The exigencies of a calendar, with its months, weeks, and days, preclude any real classification of merit; nor is any such thing attempted. It is a mode of teaching history, using the artifice of associating the names of certain famous men with months, weeks, and days. And the object is to impress on the mind the multiplicity of the forces and elements which make up civilization. To suppose that all names which occupy similar places represent men of exactly equal merit is a gratuitous piece of absurdity introduced into a fine conception. Even in the Church Calendar there is St. Paul's Day and St. Swithin's Day, though no one supposes that St. Swithin is regarded as the equal of St. Paul. But Comte's Historical Calendar has no analogy with the Catholic Calendar at all. It is a concrete view of history, intended to commemorate the sum of human civilization.[1]

I shall certainly not enter into any defence of it. It seems to me the best synthetic scheme of history which has ever been constructed on a single page.

[1] A single example may show with how little care Mr. Spencer looked at Comte. He complains that Comte should put Bichat above Newton, because he finds that Bichat heads a month in the Calendar, and Newton a week. Now, Comte never instituted any personal comparison between Newton and Bichat. But he explained that for the last month, which represents the course of modern science, he must choose a biologist and not a mathematician, on the ground of the superior importance of Biology. The Calendar was constructed more than thirty years ago, when certainly a thoroughly adequate type of Biology was not quite accessible. For grounds fully explained he chose Bichat. Newton takes his place with the mathematicians; but any idea that Bichat's intellect was superior to Newton's has not the smallest authority in anything said by Comte.

But I am far from supposing it perfect, nor do I doubt that it might easily be amended or revised. Mr. Spencer seems astounded that Cyrus and Godfrey, Terence and Juvenal, Froissart and Palissy, should hold in it the places they do. To discuss that question would involve a long historical argument, and I am not at all disposed to enter into any historical argument with Mr. Spencer. With all his scientific learning, and his manifold gifts, Mr. Spencer is seldom regarded as having much to tell us within the historical field. It is here that his inferiority to Comte is most strikingly seen. Those who know the harmonious power with which Comte has called forth into life the vast procession of the ages can best judge how weak by his side Mr. Spencer appears. In Mr. Spencer's theory of history the past teaches little but a few Quaker-like maxims; that it is very like a savage to fight, and that military activity and superstition are the sources of all evil. Certainly Comte, as heartily as Spencer, has condemned the military spirit in this age, and the continuance of all fictitious beliefs. But he is not so blind to facts that he does not recognize the historical uses of the military life in the past, and the beauty of many theological types. And thus it is that he feels honor for Godfrey the Crusader, as well as for Socrates the philosopher; for the conquerors Cyrus and Sesostris, as well as for Penn the Quaker, and St. Paul the Apostle.

There is a certain 'fallacy of the Den' running through Mr. Spencer's historical notions, of which his article gives very striking examples. Possessed

by his theory of indefinite 'differentiation, the course of civilization presents itself to his mind as a perpetual development of new forces — progression in a constant series of divergent lines. According to this view of history, an institution, an idea, an energy which the civilization of to-day has abandoned is finally condemned; to revive it under new forms, is retrogression. Since savages respected their ancestors, it would be savage to respect our ancestors. Since we have been tending, during the last two or three centuries, to lessen all temporal and spiritual influence on the individual, we must go on till we have reduced both to zero. Since war is inhuman, the qualities and habits which the military life promoted are equally abominable. To revive anything which modern society has discarded is retrogression. For the test with Mr. Spencer is not whether it is relatively good or bad for man, but is found in the fact of Evolution absolutely.

Now, this error affects all that Mr. Spencer says about the history of civilization. The truth is, as Comte has so wonderfully shown, the story of man's development is a tale of continued revival, reconstruction, and fresh adjustments of social life. Old habits, thoughts, and energies spring into a new life, under altered forms, and in new co-ordination. Development means not indefinite differentiation, but continuous growth, with organic re-adjustment of the organism to its environment. And that organic re-adjustment is constantly demanding the renewal of dormant elements, and the new uses of old things. I

should be sorry to think that Humanity were for ever condemned to lose everything which the taste of this somewhat cynical, material and democratic generation is pleased to throw off. The phrase Retrogressive Religion does not frighten me at all. Any religion that the Future of Man is to have will be retrogressive in this sense; that it will revive something of religious feelings which were once more active in the world than they happen to be to-day. Whether an enthusiastic regard for the welfare of our human race be retrogressive religion or not I care little. I should have thought it to be a new and a progressive type of creed, more so than the worship of the Ultimate Cause, and the Creative Power, and the All-Being; where I find, indeed (and where the *Christian World* finds also), retrogression into Metaphysic and Theology.

III.

I turn now to the question — if Humanity be an adequate object of religion? — a question, as I say, independent of the forms in which Comte proposed to constitute it. Mr. Mill, with all his hostility to Positivism, asserted emphatically that it was; and he went so far as to say that every other type of religion would be the better in so far as it approached the religion of Humanity. And first let us note that Mr. Spencer has given a quite exaggerated sense to what we mean by Religion and Humanity, by attaching to these ideas theological associations. The same

thing is done by Sir James Stephen, and by all our theological critics. Mr. Spencer asks, What are the claims of Humanity to 'Godhood'? Sir James Stephen talks of 'Mr. Harrison's God,' of 'the shadow of a God,' and he says he would as soon 'worship' the ugliest idol in India as the human race. All this is to foist in theological ideas where none are suggested by us. Humanity is neither the shadow of God nor the substitute for God, nor has it any analogy with God. No one claims any 'godhood' for humanity, or any perfection of any kind. We do not ask any one to 'worship' it, as Hindoos worship idols, or as Christians worship God or the Virgin. If it misleads people, I am quite willing to speak humanity with a small 'h,' or not to use the word at all. I am quite content to speak of the human race, if that makes things clearer; I am ready to give up the word 'worship,' if that is a stumbling-block, and to speak of showing affection and reverence. If people mean by religion going down on their knees and invoking a supernatural being, I will wait till the word 'religion' has lost these associations.

The very purpose of the Positive Scheme is to satisfy rational people that, though the ecstatic 'worship' of supernatural divinities has come to an end, intelligent love and respect for our human brotherhood will help us to do our duty in life. So stated, the proposition is almost a truism; it is undoubtedly the practical conviction of millions of good people, and, as it seems, is that of Sir James Stephen. In

plain words, the Religion of Humanity means recognizing your duty to your fellow man on human grounds. This is the sum and substance of that which it pleases some critics and some philosophers to represent as a grotesque delusion. Whatever is grotesque in the idea is derived from the extravagance with which they themselves distort that idea. I have no wish to 'worship' Humanity in any other sense than as a man may worship his own father and mother. A good man feels affection and reverence for his father and his mother; he can cultivate that feeling and make it the spring of conduct. And the feeling is not destroyed by his finding that his father and mother had the failings of men and women. Something of the affection, and more of the sense of brotherhood, which a man feels towards his own parents, he feels towards his family; not a little of it even to his home, his city, or his province, and much of it towards his country. Every good and active man recognizes the tie that binds him to a widening series of groups of his kinsmen and fellow men. In that feeling there are elements of respect, elements of affection, and elements of devotion, in certain degrees. That sense of respect, affection, and devotion can be extended wider than country. It can be extended, I say, as far as the human race itself. And since patriotism does not stop with our actual contemporaries, but extends to the memories and the future of our countrymen, so, I maintain, our feeling for the human race must include what it has been, as well as what it is to be. That is all that I mean

by the religion of humanity. What is there of 'grotesque,' of the ugliest of Hindoo idols, and all the rest of it, in so commonplace an opinion?

All good and even all decent men about us daily order their lives under a more or less effective sense of their social duties. They live more or less for their wives, their children, their parents, their family. I do not deny that they live largely for themselves also: but with good men and good women the two strands of motive are beautifully bound in one. And the better the man, the more close is the harmony between his social and his personal life. Outside their family, men have other strong ties of duty and of regard for definite social groups. They will do much for their friends, their party, their profession, their church, their academy, their class, their city, their country. It is disgraceful to proclaim one's self indifferent to these claims: to refuse to make any sacrifice for them, to deny that we owe them anything, or that we feel any regard for them. There is nothing very heroic about all this in the average; and it is always more or less mixed up with personal motives. But in the main it is good and wholesome, and bears noble witness to the marvellous social nature of man. Now I do not say that this in itself is religion. But I mean by religion this sense of social duty, pushed to its full extent, strengthened by a sound view of human nature, and warmed by the glow of imagination and sympathy. It has been said in a vague way that religion is 'morality touched by emotion.' The religion of Humanity, as I conceive

it, is simply *morality fused with social devotion, and enlightened by sound philosophy.*

Yet men who are known to live under a practical sense of their social duties, men who would be ashamed to profess total unconcern for father, mother, wife and child, friends and fellow citizens, are not ashamed to exhaust the terms of opprobrium for the collective notion of humanity; which after all is only made up of a multitude of fathers, mothers, wives, children, friends, fellow citizens, and fellow men. Mr. Spencer's whole life (as his friends know even better than the world) has been one of unfaltering devotion to his great mistress Philosophy, worthy to compare with any in the roll of the 'lovers of wisdom.' Sir James Stephen is no less widely known, not only for his indefatigable public services, but for his hearty private character; a devoted public servant, who, it is said, sentences even the worst criminal 'gently, as if he loved him,' under a strong sense of public duty. Yet these eminent men, whose entire lives are filled with social, rather than personal, energy, have no words strong enough for (controversial purposes) to express their contempt for the human race. Mankind, says Mr. Spencer, is 'a bubble,' 'a dull leaden-hued thing.' Sir James Stephen says it is 'a stupid, ignorant half-beast of a creature;' and he would as soon worship the ugliest Hindoo idol, before which the natives chop off the heads of goats. Why, this is the raving of Timon of Athens! These men are not cynics, but merely philosophers attacking an opponent. To my mind all this is sheer nonsense.

Men, known to be generous and self-devoted in every duty of social life, are not believed when they utter tirades of this kind against mankind and human nature.

If the human race be 'a half-beast of a creature,' if it be this dismal 'bubble,' what else or what better have we? Why should they, or any man, waste lives of effort in its service; what is the worth of anything generous, humane, and social? Humanity, I say, is nothing but the sum of all the forces of individual men and women; and if it be this mere bubble and half-beast, the men and women that make it up, and the human feelings and forces which have created it, must be equally worthy of our loathing and contempt. In that case our only philosophy is a malignant pessimism, exceeding anything ever attempted in misanthropy before. I am no optimist; and I certainly see no 'godhood' in the human race. I am as much alive to the vice and weakness of the human race as any one. But I feel, in common with the great majority of sound-hearted men, that there is a great deal of human nature in the human race, and that of good human nature; that the good abundantly predominates, and that the great story of human progress is on the whole a worthy and an inspiring record. At any rate, this planet, and, so far as we know, this Universe, has nothing (in the moral sphere) which is more worthy and more inspiring of hope. *Nec viget quidquam simile, aut secundum.* Divinities, and Absolute Goodnesses, and Absolute Powers have ended for us. The relative goodness and

power of our race remains a solid reality. It is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; the stuff whereof our mothers, and our fathers, our sons and our friends, our fellow citizens are made; whereof are made all who with us and beside us are striving to live a humane life.

I will not do my friends the injustice of supposing that any regard for men which they acknowledge is confined to their own belongings and circles, and that for the rest of mankind they feel (what they assert) supreme contempt and dislike. Their words would suggest it. To Mr. Spencer Europe presents nothing but the revolting prospect of 'a hundred millions of Pagans masquerading as Christians.' Sir James Stephen says that a majority of the human race cannot read, and devote their time to nothing but daily labor. Are they mere beasts for that? Some of the greatest and best of men could not read; some of the noblest natures on earth are spent in the hovel and the garret of the poor. It is the task of the religion of Humanity to correct such anti-social thoughts, the besetting sin of the philosopher and the man of power. It will teach their pride that the nobility of human nature is to be found chiefly in the cottage and the workshop; where the untaught mother is lavishing on her children unutterable wealth of tenderness; where the patient toiler is subduing the earth that for the common good wise men may have an earth whereon to think out the truth, and the poet and the artist may have materials to satisfy us all with beauty.

Comte, of all men, did not choose out five hundred names to be 'worshipped' as 'saints,' devoting the five hundred millions to oblivion. He taught us to see the greatness of human nature in the love and courage of the ignorant, as well as in the genius and the might of the hero. And when we think of Humanity our minds are not set on a band of the 'elect' but on the millions who people this earth and subdue it, leaving each century on the whole a richer inheritance in comfort, in thought, in virtue; — millions not in the civilized world only, but in the rude plains of Asia, and of Africa, where the Hindoo struggles to rear an honest household in his plot of rice-field, and the Fellah yields to the will of Heaven with sublime patience, whilst retaining uncrushed his human heart. Assuredly it is no 'godhood' that we see there, no pride of human reason, no millennium, or transfiguration of man. But it is human nature, sound down to its depths; rich with unfathomable love wherever there is a mother and a child, and rich with undying courage wherever there is the father of an honest and thriving household.

But it is not the present generation which absorbs our thought. Mankind, as we see it to-day, is neither god-like nor very sublime. But the story of human progress during fifty centuries, from the 'half-beast' that it once was in the pre-historic ages down to the ideal civilization which we surely foresee in the far-off ages to come — this is sublime. Or, if not sublime in the way in which the fairy-tale of Paradise, or the Creation of the Universe, is sublime, it is

still the most splendid tale of *moral development* of which we have any certain record. I am not at all disenchanted when I am reminded of the savagery, the bestiality, or even the cannibalism of man's early career. There were noble savages even in the Palæolithic ages, and even the earliest type of man was superior in something, I suppose, to contemporary types of the age. But such as he was I accept him as the ancestor of the human race, to whom it owes its first beginning. The glory of Humanity is not lost, in that it was once so low, but lies in that, beginning so low, it is now so high.

It is for this reason that Comte has insisted so much on the Past, and the religious value of a true conception of human civilization. It shocks Mr. Spencer to look with anything but horror on our fighting and savage forefathers. But, such as they were, they made civilization possible. And the grandeur of human civilization as a whole can only be realized in the mind when it constantly dwells on the enormous record of its progress from the half-bestial beginnings out of which it has slowly arisen by incalculable efforts and hopes. Still, it is a record of much failure, of shortcomings at the best. And for this reason Positivism dwells quite as much in the Future as in the Past. Endless progress towards a perfection never, perhaps, to be reached, but to be ideally cherished in hope, a hope which every stroke of science and every line of history confirms to us, and with which every generous instinct of our nature beats in unison — such is the practical heaven of our

faith. As there is no godhood now in Humanity, so there is no Paradise in its future. Past, Present, and Future, all alike dwell on this earth; on the facts of man's actual career in the dwelling-place that he has made for himself thereon.

Mr. Spencer is himself far too much of a philosopher, and too much of a believer in moral progress, not to have a deep faith in this very march of civilization, of which Humanity, as I understand it, is at once product and author. He says himself: 'Surely civilized society, with its complex arrangements and involved processes, its multitudinous material products and almost magical instruments, its language, science, literature, art, must be credited to some agency or other.' The words are not mine, but his. That is to say, the story of human civilization is a very noble record, demanding, as he admits, 'veneration and gratitude' somewhere. And in these words he throws to the winds 'the bubble,' and 'the dull leaden-hued thing,' 'the hundred million Pagans masquerading,' 'the stupid, ignorant half-beast of a creature,' as the judge calls it. The human race then is not the odious bubble; on the contrary, the splendid story of human civilization must fill us with a sense of 'veneration and gratitude.' But by astonishing perversity, as it seems to me, by long habit of 'persistent thinking along defined grooves,' Mr. Spencer has nothing but contempt for the human race, and lavishes his 'veneration and gratitude,' called out by the sum of human civilization, upon his Unknowable and Inconceivable Postulate. This is to me to outdo

the ingratitude of the theologians who find 'man only vile,' and who ascribe every good thing in man's evil nature to an ineffable Being. Since Mr. Spencer agrees with me that 'veneration and gratitude,' for all that man has become, are due somewhere, I prefer to ascribe it to that human race, which we know and feel; and which, so far as we can see, has fashioned its own destiny, in spite of tremendous obstacles in its environment; rather than to a logician's formula, about which the logican himself tells us that he knows nothing and conceives nothing.

Mr. Spencer has labored to prove that Humanity (which he himself has so admirably described as a real organism) is unconscious. He might have spared his pains. Neither Comte, nor any rational Positivist, has ever regarded Humanity as conscious. And, for that reason, nothing will induce me to address Humanity as a conscious being, or in any way whatever to treat it as a Person. In that respect it stands on the same footing as Mr. Spencer's Unknowable, except that I say frankly that I have not the least reason to suppose Humanity to be conscious; whilst he will not say that his Unknowable may not be conscious (as it might be a gooseberry or a parallelopiped). And then Mr. Spencer goes on to argue that, since Humanity is not conscious, that concludes the matter; 'for gratitude cannot be entertained towards something which is unconscious.' And by a really curious inconsistency he asserts that 'veneration and gratitude' are due towards the Unknowable, which he has just told us cannot be conceived in

terms of consciousness at all! So that he will not let me feel any gratitude to the human race, my own kindred, because it is unconscious; and he asks me to bestow it all on his unconscious, or non-conscious, or outside-of-all-consciousness Unknowable.

Apart from this singular slip in logic, he says much about the unconsciousness of the human race which amazes me. Why cannot a man feel any gratitude towards that which is unconscious? He tells us to examine our consciousness. Well! Did all the gratitude which he felt during life to his own parents, teachers, and benefactors cease at the instant of their death? I cannot find it in my consciousness. My gratitude to my parents is the same, living or dead; and, if gratitude to one parent can be expressed and answered in words, whilst gratitude to the other lies but in the silent communing of the heart, I cannot find that the one gratitude differs from the other, save that this last is the deeper, more abiding feeling. And, if a man is unworthy of the name of man who can feel no gratitude to a parent or a benefactor, the moment they are laid cold in death, why cannot a man feel grateful to the school where he was trained, or the church wherein he was reared, or the country of his forefathers and his descendants? And by school, church, or country, I mean the men therein grouped, some known, some unknown, some by personal contact, some by spiritual influence, by whose labor he has reaped and grown.

Mr. Spencer goes further in the same line. Since the human race, he says, was unconscious whilst

slowly evolving its own civilization, since the individual men and women were not consciously conferring any benefits on us, and very partially foresaw the result of their own labor, we owe them no gratitude. They acted automatically or like coral-polyps by instinct, following their own natures, satisfying their own craving, and we owe them no more gratitude than we owe to hogs for fattening, or to sheep, for growing woolly coats. Watt, according to this view, invented the steam-engine to make money or occupy his mind. Newton and Leibnitz toiled only for fame. If the poets and artists created beauty, it was because they liked beauty, and hoped for reward. I confess this seems to me to strike at the root of morality and all estimate whatever of human greatness and merit. A philosopher will tell us next that he owes no gratitude to the father who begat him, or the mother who nursed him; for both were obeying instincts which they share with the lowest animals. If heroes, poets, and thinkers are mere automata, selfishly and blindly following instincts, like the polyps working their tentacles and thereby forming a coral reef, morality, and most of the moral qualities of man, are things which we cannot predicate of man at all.

Man is no doubt a highly complex being, and his moral, intellectual, and physical natures are blended in marvellous ways. It was never pretended by the optimist that any man has acted uniformly on the noblest motives; but it has never been asserted by the pessimist that he acts invariably on the vilest.

It is a mark of the meanest nature to refuse to acknowledge a benefit, on the ground that the benefactor was not wholly absorbed with the wish to benefit, or entirely aware of the extent of his benefit. For my part, I refuse to measure out my sense of gratitude to my human benefactors, known or unknown, by so niggardly a rule. I trust that Raffaelle and Shakespeare did enjoy their work. But I love and admire the genius in which they revelled. Humanity is rich with gratitude to those who knew not the value of the services they were rendering, just as it is to those whose names and services are covered in the vast wave of time. What becomes of Patriotism, if it be open to us to sneer out that the men who fought our battles or made our country wanted nothing but money and fame? What becomes of family affection, if a man can tell his mother that bore him that if she reared children it was only what cats and rabbits do?

The religion of Humanity, as we understand it, is nothing but the idealized sum of those human feelings and duties which all decent men acknowledge in detail and in fact. All healthy morality, as well as all sound philosophy, shows us that the sum total of all this mass of life is good, and is tending towards better. As Mr. Spencer admits, civilized society as a whole must command 'admiration and gratitude' somewhere. This being so, the sneers of philosophers and cynics may be left out of sight. I shall not follow Mr. Spencer in the wails of his Jeremiad over the folly and wickedness of his contemporaries.

Millions, he says, still go to church and chapel, instead of studying Evolution and Differentiation, or praying to the Unknowable at home. At Eton and Harrow boys are taught to make Latin verses, and not the genesis of species. The House of Commons will not let Mr. Bradlaugh take his seat; and many still admire Lord Beaconsfield. Many people were sorry when young Bonaparte was killed by the Zulus; and they gave a dinner to Hobart Pasha. At a dinner in France, the 'army' was given as a toast. And German students will fight duels. And for these reasons Mr. Herbert Spencer has a great contempt for his species. *Risum teneatis, amici?* I must treat this as a mere outburst of ill-humor. We all know that there is folly, vice, and misery enough in the world — and for that reason all *absolute* 'worship' of any one or anything is out of the question. Strangely enough, Mr. Spencer, who finds this folly and vice preclude him from any respect for Humanity, does not see that it ought also to bar any 'veneration and gratitude' to the Unknowable; to which he ascribes the honor of producing civilized society, in spite of all its shortcomings. For my part, I am not to be shaken in my belief that the sum of civilized society is *relatively* worthy of honor, by such melancholy facts as that Mr. Bradlaugh cannot get his seat, and that German students slit each others' noses.

Mr. Spencer raises a great difficulty over the fact that there are, and have been, very evil people in the world, who cannot be included in the Humanity

which we are to honor.[1] And he asks why they are excluded from the notion. No one has worked out the organic unity and life of the Human Organism more clearly than Mr. Spencer himself. When we think and speak of that organism, we think and speak of those organs and elements which share in its organic life, and not of the excrescences, maladies, or excrement, so to speak, which it has finally eliminated. Men have a warm regard for their family, though there may be a blackguard in it, for whom they have no regard at all. They feel loyalty to their profession or their party, though they know that it counts not a few black sheep. And patriotism is quite possible towards our countrymen past and present, though some of the worst men in history have been amongst them. We are justly proud of our English race; but when we speak of its achievements we are not including in our honor King John, Guy Fawkes, and Titus Oates. If the existence of a minority of evil men makes it impossible to think of Humanity as a whole, or to honor it as a whole, the same argument would make it impossible to think of country as a whole, or to honor it as a whole. And this applies also to what Mr. Spencer calls 'civilized society.'

[1] He cannot reconcile Comte's definition of Humanity '*as the whole* of human beings, past, present, and future,' with the statement that 'the word *whole* points out that you must not take in all men.' If Mr. Spencer would take some pains to understand Comte, he would see that the French word is '*ensemble*;' that is to say, Humanity includes the sum of human civilization, but does not include every individual man, who may not have contributed at all to this *ensemble* or 'sum.'

The analogies of Humanity are to be found with such minor aggregates of civilized society as Family, Church, State, Country. It has no analogy at all with God, or divinity in any form. When Mr. Spencer says that we 'deify' Humanity, it would be as just to say that he deifies Evolution. He thinks that Evolution is the key of our mental and moral Synthesis. I think that Humanity is. But as I do not suppose that he finds 'any claims to godhood' in Evolution, I beg him not to suppose that I find any in Humanity. If Family, Church, State, Country, are real aggregates, worthy of gratitude and respect, *à fortiori*, Humanity is a real aggregate, worthy of respect and gratitude. I cannot understand how the smaller aggregates can inspire us with any worthy sentiment at all, whilst the fuller aggregate of the Family of Mankind inspires nothing but contempt and aversion.

A few words on the original idea put forth by Sir James Stephen. Suppose that it turns out, he says, there is no possible object of Religion left to man, cannot he do very well without Religion altogether? It is a view that is often secretly cherished by the comfortable, the strong, and the selfish; but I am not aware that it has ever been calmly argued before as a contribution to the philosophy of religion. If his meaning be that we can do without adoration of any superhuman power, without believing anything to be above human science, or out of the range of human life, of course I wholly agree with him. And if he thinks that mankind will get on very well by means

of human education, human morality, and the sense of practical duty to our fellow beings — then he is something of an unconscious Positivist himself, and no one will ask him to go on his knees to an abstract notion, or to go through any imitation of Christian or other theological practices which he may regard as mummery. For my part, I neither desire nor expect that Christian charity or Christian morality of any kind, will be preserved. It will be enlarged and solidified into human charity and human morality. And adopting all that Sir James has said thereon, I claim him as speaking on my side — as he certainly repudiates Mr. Spencer.

But this human charity and human morality will never be established if the peculiar cynicism which Sir James affects about the human race were ever to prevail. He says most truly that 'love, friendship, good-nature, kindness, carried to the height of sincere and devoted affection, will always be the chief pleasures of life, whether Christianity be true or false.' Comte himself never put it higher, and I am thinking of quoting this sentence as the text of my next discourse at Newton Hall. But this will not be so — love, friendship, kindness, and devoted affection will not always be the chief pleasures of life — if philosophers succeed in persuading the world that the human race are a set of Yahoos. Sir James also sees that, apart from any theology whatever, the social nature of man will itself produce 'a solid, vigorous, useful kind of moral standard;' and he goes on to show that this morality will have a poetic side, will

affect the imagination and the heart by becoming idealized, and issuing in enthusiasm as well as conviction. O upright Judge! O most learned Judge!

I ask no more than this. The Religion of Humanity means to me this solid, vigorous, useful moral standard, based on the belief that sincere and devoted affection is the chief pleasure of life, cultivated and idealized till it produces enthusiasm. Only I insist that it will need the whole force of education through life, all the resources which engender habits, stir the imagination, and kindle self-devotion, in order to keep this spirit alive in the masses of mankind. The cultivated, the thoughtful, and the well-to-do can nourish this solid morality in a cool, self-contained, sub-cynical way. But to soften and purify the masses of mankind we shall need all the passion and faith which are truly dignified by the name of religion — religious respect, religious sense of duty, religious belief in something vastly nobler and stronger than self. They will find this in the mighty tale of human civilization. They will never find it in the philosopher's hypothesis of an Infinite Unknowable substratum, which 'cannot be presented in terms of human consciousness,' of which we can know nothing and can conceive nothing. Nor do I think they will ever find it in the common-sense maxim that 'this is a very comfortable world for the prudent, the lucky, and the strong.'

FREDERIC HARRISON.

Postscript.

I have found no space to notice Mr. Wilfrid Ward and some of my other critics. I do not find that Mr. Ward has added much to the controversy except the rather mess-room remark that Mr. Spencer and myself are both mad. I am the less called on to examine his views, inasmuch as his own religious standpoint, I believe, is Catholicism in its most Ultramontane form — the Syllabus and the Papacy. But in whatever form he may care to present it, Catholicism is not, in my opinion, within the field of serious religious philosophy. And, if the thinking world is not yet ready to accept mine, it has so long ago decided to reject his, that the question need hardly be revived in the *Nineteenth Century*.

To all that he and others have said, as to the same difficulties and weaknesses confronting the idea of Humanity as meet that of the Unknowable, I could have little trouble in showing, that as we claim for Humanity nothing absolute, nothing unreal, and nothing ecstatic, no such difficulties arise. It is a strength and a comfort to all, whether weak, suffering, or bereaved, to feel that the whole sum of human effort in the past, as in the present, is steadily working, on the whole, to lessen the sum of misery, to help the fatherless and the widow, to assuage sickness, and to comfort the lonely. This is a real and solid encouragement, proved by all the facts of progressive civilization. If it is not the comfort offered by promises of ecstatic bliss, and supernatural intervention, it has the merit of being true and humane; not egoist and untrue. If it is not enough, it is at least all that men and women on earth have. Resignation and peace will be theirs when we have taught them habitually to know that it is all — when the promises of the churches are known to be false, and the hopes of the superstitious are felt to be dreams. —F. H.

LAST WORDS ABOUT AGNOSTICISM AND THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

THOSE who expected from Mr. Harrison an interesting rejoinder to my reply, will not be disappointed. Those who looked for points skilfully made, which either are, or seem to be, telling, will be fully satisfied. Those who sought pleasure from witnessing the display of literary power, will close his article gratified with the hour they have spent over it. Those only will be not altogether contented who supposed that my outspoken criticism of Mr. Harrison's statements and views, would excite him to an unusual display of that trenchant style for which he is famous; since he has for the most part continued the discussion with calmness. After saying this much it may seem that some apology is needed for continuing a controversy of which many, if not most, readers, have by this time become weary. But gladly as I would leave the matter where it stands, alike to save my own time and others' attention, there are sundry motives which forbid me. Partly my excuse must be the profound importance and perennial interest of the question raised. Partly I am prompted by the consideration that it is a pity to cease just when

a few more pages will make a clear sundry of the issues, and leave readers in a better position for deciding. Partly it seems to me wrong to leave grave misunderstandings unrectified. And partly I am reluctant on personal grounds to pass by some of Mr. Harrison's statements unnoticed.

One of these statements, indeed, it would be imperative on me to notice, since it reflects on me in a serious way. Speaking of the *Descriptive Sociology*, which contains a large part (though by no means all) of the evidence used in the *Principles of Sociology*, and referring to the compilers who, under my superintendence, selected the materials forming that work, Mr. Harrison says: —

> Of course these intelligent gentlemen had little difficulty in clipping from hundreds of books about foreign races sentences which seem to support Mr. Spencer's doctrines. The whole proceeding is too much like that of a famous lawyer who wrote a law-book, and then gave it to his pupils to find the 'cases' which supported his law.

Had Mr. Harrison observed the dates, he would have seen that since the compilation of the *Descriptive Sociology* was commenced in 1867 and the writing of *Principles of Sociology* in 1874, the parallel he draws is not altogether applicable: the fact being that the *Descriptive Sociology* was commenced seven years in advance for the purpose (as stated in the preface) of obtaining adequate materials for generalizations: sundry of which, I may remark in passing, have been quite at variance with my pre-conceptions.[1] I think

[1] Elsewhere Mr. Harrison contemptuously refers to the *Descriptive Sociology* as 'a pile of clippings made to order.' While I have

that, on consideration, Mr. Harrison will regret having [illegible] very good war- [illegible] Charity would almost [illegible] was not fully conscious of [illegible] the above passage: for [illegible] immediately afterwards. [illegible] one can find in this me- [illegible] view. And I find facts [illegible] as often as any other.' How [illegible] consists with the insinuation that [illegible] calls a 'medley' of tables con- [illegible] vitiated by special selection of facts, [illegible] understand. If the purpose was to [illegible] conclusion, how does it happen that [illegible] according to Mr. Harrison) as many facts [illegible] against it as there are facts which make [illegible]

The question here incidentally raised concerns the [illegible] religious idea. Which is the original belief, [illegible] or the ghost-theory? The answer should [illegible] interest all who care to understand the [illegible] of human thought; and I shall therefore not [illegible] for pursuing the question a little further.

Having had them counted, I find that in those four parts of the *Descriptive Sociology* which give accounts of the uncivilized races, there are 697 extracts which

been writing, the original directions to compilers have been found by my present secretary, Mr. James Bridge; and he has drawn my attention to one of the 'orders.' It says that all works are 'to be read not with a view to any particular class of facts but with a view to all classes of facts.'

refer to the ghost-theory: illustrating the belief in a wandering double which goes away during sleep, or fainting, or other form of insensibility, and deserts the body for a longer period at death, — a double which can enter into and possess other persons, causing disease, epilepsy, insanity, etc., which gives rise to ideas of spirits, demons, etc., and which originates propitiation and worship of ghosts. On the other hand there are 87 extracts which refer to the worship of inanimate objects or belief in their supernatural powers. Now even did these 87 extracts support Mr. Harrison's view, this ratio of 8 to 1 would hardly justify his statement that the facts 'make for my [his] view as often as any other.' But these 87 extracts do not make for his view. To get proof that the inanimate objects are worshipped for themselves simply, instances must be found in which such objects are worshipped among peoples who have no ghost-theory; for wherever the ghost-theory exists it comes into play and originates those supernatural powers which certain objects are supposed to have. When by unrelated tribes, scattered all over the world, we find it held that the souls of the dead are supposed to haunt the neighboring forests — when we learn that the Karén thinks 'the spirits of the departed dead crowd around him;' [1] that the Society Islanders imagined spirits 'surrounded them night and day, watching every action;' [2] that the Nicobar people annually compel all the bad spirits to leave

[1] *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, xxiv. part ii. p.196.
[2] Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, vol. i. p. 525.

the dwelling;[1] that an Arab never throws anything away without asking forgiveness of the Efrits he may strike;[2] and that the Jews thought it was because of the multitudes of spirits in synagogues that 'the dress of the Rabbins became so soon old and torn, through their rubbing;'[3] — when we find the accompanying belief to be that ghosts or spirits are capable of going into, and emerging from, solid bodies in general, as well as the bodies of the quick and the dead; it becomes obvious that the presence of one of these spirits swarming around, and capable of injuring or benefiting living persons, becomes a sufficient reason for propitiating an object it is assumed to have entered: the most trivial peculiarity sufficing to suggest possession — such possession being, indeed, in some cases conceived as universal, as by the Eskimo, who think every object is ruled by 'its or his *inuk*, which word signifies "*man*," and also *owner* or *inhabitant*.'[4] Such being the case, there can be no proof that the worship of the objects themselves was primordial, unless it is found to exist where the ghost-theory has not arisen; and I know no instance showing that it does so. But while those facts given in the *Descriptive Sociology* which imply worship of inanimate objects, or ascription of supernatural powers to them, fail to support Mr. Harrison's view, because always accompanied by the

[1] *Journ. As. of Ben.* xv. pp. 348–9.
[2] Bastian, *Mensch*, ii. 109, 113.
[3] *Supernatural Religion*, 2d ed., vol. i. p. 112.
[4] Dr. Henry Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, p. 37.

ghost-theory, sundry of them directly negative his view. There is the fact that echo is regarded as the voice of the fetich; there is the fact that the inhabiting spirit of the fetich is supposed to 'enjoy the savory smell' of meat roasted before it; and there is the fact that the fetich is supposed to die and may be revived. Further, there is the summarized statement made by Beecham, an observer of fetichism in the region where it is supposed to be specially exemplified, who says that: —

> The fetiches are believed to be spiritual, intelligent beings, who make the remarkable objects of nature their residence, or enter occasionally into the images and other artificial representations, which have deen duly consecrated by certain ceremonies. . . . They believe that these fetiches are of both sexes, and that they require food.

These statements are perfectly in harmony with the conclusion that fetichism is a development of the ghost-theory, and altogether incongruous with the interpretation of fetichism which Mr. Harrison accepts from Comte.

Already I have named the fact that Dr. Tylor, who has probably read more books about uncivilized peoples than any Englishman living or dead, has concluded that fetichism is a form of spirit-worship, and that (to give quotations relevant to the present issue)

> To class an object as a fetich, demands explicit statement that a spirit is considered as embodied in it or acting through it or communicating by it.[1]

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii. p. 133.

. . . A further stretch of imagination enables the lower races to associate the souls of the dead with mere objects.[1]

. . . The spirits which enter or otherwise attach themselves to objects may be human souls. Indeed, one of the most natural cases of the fetich-theory is when a soul inhabits or haunts the relics of its former body.[2]

Here I may add an opinion to like effect which Dr. Tylor quotes from the late Professor Waitz, also an erudite anthropologist. He says: —

According to his [the negro's] view, a spirit dwells or can dwell in every sensible object, and often a very great and mighty one in an insignificant thing. This spirit he does not consider as bound fast and unchangeably to the corporeal thing it dwells in, but it has only its usual or principal abode in it.[3]

Space permitting, I might add evidence furnished by Sir Alfred Lyall, who, in his valuable papers furnished in the *Fortnightly Review* years ago on religion in India, has given the results of observations made there. Writing to me from the North-West provinces under date August 1, in reference to the controversy between Mr. Harrison and myself, he incloses copies of a letter and accompanying memorandum from the Magistrate of Gorakhpur, in verification of the doctrine that ghost-worship is the 'chief source and origin' of religion. Not, indeed, that I should hope by additional evidence to convince Mr. Harrison. When I point to the high authority of Dr. Tylor as on the side of the ghost-theory, Mr. Harrison says — 'If Dr. Tylor has finally adopted it, I am sorry.' And now I suppose that

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii. p. 139.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 137. [3] *Ibid.* p. 144.

when I cite these further high authorities on the same side, he will simply say again 'I am sorry,' and continue to believe as before.

In respect of the fetichism distinguishable as nature-worship, Mr. Harrison relies much on the Chinese. He says: —

> The case of China is decisive. There we have a religion of vast antiquity and extent, perfectly clear and well ascertained. It rests entirely upon worship of Heaven, and Earth, and objects of Nature, regarded as organized beings, and not as the abode of human spirits.

Had I sought for a case of 'a religion of vast antiquity and extent, perfectly clear and well ascertained,' which illustrates origin from the ghost-theory, I should have chosen that of China; where the State-religion continues down to the present day to be an elaborate ancestor-worship, where each man's chief thought in life is to secure the due making of sacrifices to his ghost after death, and where the failure of a first wife to bear a son who shall make these sacrifices, is held a legitimate reason for taking a second. But Mr. Harrison would, I suppose, say that I had selected facts to fit my hypothesis. I therefore give him, instead, the testimony of a bystander. Count D'Alviella has published a *brochure* concerning these questions on which Mr. Harrison and I disagree.[1] In it he says, on page 15: —

> La thèse de M. Harrison, au contraire, — que l'homme aurait commencé par l'adoration d'objets matériels 'franchement regardés comme tels,' — nous paraît absolument contraire au raisonnement et à l'observation. Il cite, à titre d'example, l'antique religion de

[1] *Harrison contre Spencer sur la Valeur Religieuse de l'Inconnaissable*, par le Cte. Goblet D'Alviella. Paris, Ernest Leroux.

la Chine, 'entièrement basée sur la vénération de la Terre, du Ciel et des Ancêtres, considérés objectivement et non comme la résidence d'êtres immatériels.' [This sentence is from Mr. Harrison's first article, not from his second.] C'est là jouer de malheur, car, sans même insister sur ce que peuvent être des Ancêtres 'considérés objectivement,' il se trouve précisément que la religion de l'ancien empire Chinois est le type le plus par fait de l'animisme organizé, et qu'elle regarde même les objets matériels, dont elle fait ses dieux, comme la manifestation inseparable, l'enveloppe ou même le corps d'esprits invisibles. [Here in a note Count D'Alviella refers to authorities, 'notamment Tiele, *Manuel de l'Histoire des Religions*, traduit dar M. Maurice Vernes, Liv. II., et dans la *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, la *Religion de l'ancien empire Chinois* par M. Julius Happel (t. IV. no. 6).']

Whether Mr. Harrison's opinion is or is not changed by this array of counter opinion, he may at any rate be led somewhat to qualify his original statement that 'Nothing is more certain than that man everywhere started with a simple worship of natural objects.'

I pass now to Mr. Harrison's endeavor to rebut my assertion that he had demolished a *simulacrum* and not the reality.

I pointed out that he had inverted my meaning by representing as negative that which I regarded as positive. What I have everywhere referred to as the All-Being, he named the All-Nothingness. What answer does he make when I show that my position is exactly the reverse of that alleged? He says that while I am 'dealing with transcendental conceptions, intelligible only to certain trained metaphysicians,' he is 'dealing with religion as it affects the lives of men and women in the world;' that 'to ordinary

men and women an unknowable and inconceivable Reality is practically an Unreality;' and that thus all he meant to say was that the 'Everlasting Yes' of the 'evolutionist,' is in effect on the public a mere 'Everlasting No' (p. 93). Now compare these passages in his last article with the following passages in his first article:—'One would like to know how much of the Evolutionist's day is consecrated to seeking the Unknowable in a devout way, and what the religious exercises might be. How does the man of science approach the All-Nothingness?' (p. 39.) Thus we see that what was at first represented as the unfitness of the creed considered as offered to the select is now represented as its unfitness considered as offered to the masses. What were originally the 'Evolutionist' and the 'man of science' are now changed into 'ordinary men and women' and 'the public;' and what was originally called the All-Nothingness has become an 'inconceivable Reality.' The statement which was to be justified is not justified, but something else is justified in its stead.

Thus is it, too, with the paragraph in which Mr. Harrison seeks to disprove my assertion that he had exactly transposed the doctrines of Dean Mansel and myself, respecting our consciousness of that which transcends perception. He quotes his original words, which were, 'there is a gulf which separates even his all-negative *deity* from Mr. Spencer's impersonal, unconscious, unthinkable Energy.' And he then goes on to say, 'I was speaking of Mansel's Theology, not

of his Ontology. I said "*deity*," not the Absolute.' Very well; now let us see what this implies. Mansel, as I was perfectly well aware, supplements his ontological nihilism with a theological realism. That which in his ontological argument he represents as a mere 'negation of conceivability,' he subsequently re-asserts on grounds of faith, and clothes with the ordinarily-ascribed divine attributes. Which of these did I suppose Mr. Harrison meant by 'all-negative deity?' I was compelled to conclude he meant that which in the ontological argument was said to be a 'negation of conceivability.' How could I suppose that by 'all-negative deity' Mr. Harrison meant the deity which Dean Mansel as a matter of 'duty' rehabilitates and worships in his official capacity as priest. It was a considerable stretch of courage on the part of Mr. Harrison to call the deity of the established church an 'all-negative deity.' Yet in seeking to escape from the charge of misrepresenting me he inevitably does this by implication.

In his second article Mr. Harrison does not simply ascribe to me ideas which are wholly unlike those my words express, but he ascribes to me ideas I have intentionally excluded. When justifying my use of the word 'proceed,' as the most colorless word I could find to indicate the relation between the knowable manifestations present to perception and the Unknowable Reality which transcends perception, I incidentally mentioned, as showing that I wished to avoid those theological implications which Mr. Harrison said were suggested, that the words

originally written were 'created and sustained;' and that though in the sense in which I used them the meanings of these words did not exceed my thought, I had erased them because 'the ideas associated with these words might mislead.' Yet Mr. Harrison speaks of these erased words as though I had finally adopted them, and saddles me with the ordinary connotations. If Mr. Harrison defends himself by quoting my words to the effect that the Inscrutable Existence manifested through phenomena 'stands towards our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the Creative Power asserted by Theology;' then I point to all my arguments as clearly meaning that when the attributes and the mode of operation ordinarily ascribed to 'that which lies beyond the sphere of sense' will bear the same relation as before to that which lies within it, in so far that it will occupy the same relative position in the totality of our consciousness: no assertion being made concerning the mode of connection of the one with the other. Surely when I had deliberately avoided the word 'create' to express the connection between noumenal cause and the phenomenal effect, because it might suggest the ordinary idea of a creating power separate from the created thing, Mr. Harrison was not justified in basing arguments against me on the assumption that I had used it.

But the course in so many cases pursued by him of fathering upon me ideas incongruous with those I have expressed, and making me responsible for the resulting absurdities, is exhibited in the most extreme

degree by the way in which he has built up for me a system of beliefs and practices. In his first article occur such passages as — 'seeking the Unknowable in a devout way' (p. 39); can any one 'hope anything of the Unknowable or find consolation therein?' (p. 40); and to a grieving mother he represents me as replying to assuage her grief, 'Think on the Unknowable' (p. 40). Similarly in his second article he writes, 'to tell them that they are to worship this Unknowable is equivalent to telling them to worship nothing' (p. 98); 'the worship of the Unknowable is abhorrent to every instinct of genuine religion' (p. 104); 'praying to the Unknowable at home' (p. 134); and having in these and kindred ways fashioned for me the observances of a religion which he represents me as 'proposing,' he calls it 'one of the most gigantic paradoxes in the history of thought' (p. 94). So effectually has Mr. Harrison impressed everybody by these expressions and assertions, that I read in a newspaper — 'Mr. Spencer speaks of the "absurdities of the Comtean religion," but what about his own peculiar cult?'

Now the whole of this is a fabric framed out of Mr. Harrison's imaginations. I have nowhere 'proposed' any 'object of religion.' I have nowhere suggested that any one should worship this 'Unknowable.' No line of mine gives ground for inquiring how the Unknowable is to be sought 'in a devout way,' or for asking what are 'the religious exercises;' nor have I suggested that any one may find 'consolation therein.' Observe the facts. At the close of

my article, 'Religion: a Retrospect and Prospect,' I pointed out to 'those who think that Science is dissipating religious beliefs and sentiments' 'that whatever of mystery is taken from the old interpretation is added to the new:' increase rather than diminution being the result. I said that in perpetually extending our knowledge of the Universe, concrete science 'enlarges the sphere for religious sentiment;' and that progressing knowledge is 'accompanied by an increasing capacity for wonder.' And in my second article, in further explanation, I have represented my thesis to be 'that whatever components of this [the religious] sentiment disappear, there must ever survive those which are appropriate to the consciousness of a Mystery that cannot be fathomed and a Power that is omnipresent.' This is the sole thing for which I am responsible. I have advocated nothing; I have proposed no worship; I have said nothing about 'devotion,' or 'prayer,' or 'religious exercises,' or 'hope,' or 'consolation.' I have simply affirmed the permanence of certain components in the consciousness which 'is concerned with that which lies beyond the sphere of sense.' If Mr. Harrison says that this surviving sentiment is inadequate for what he thinks the purposes of religion, I simply reply — I have said nothing about its adequacy or inadequacy. The assertion that the emotions of awe and wonder form but a fragment of religion, leaves me altogether unconcerned: I have said nothing to the contrary. If Mr. Harrison sees well to describe the emotions of awe and wonder as 'some rags of

religious sentiment surviving' (p. 99), it is not incumbent on me to disprove the fitness of his expression. I am responsible for nothing whatever beyond the statement that these emotions will survive. If he shows this conclusion to be erroneous, then indeed he touches me. This, however, he does not attempt. Recognizing though he does that this is all I have asserted, and even exclaiming 'is that all?' (p. 99) he nevertheless continues to father upon me a number of ideas, quoted above, which I have neither expressed nor implied, and asks readers to observe how grotesque is the fabric formed of them.

I enter now on that portion of Mr. Harrison's last article to which is specially applicable its title 'Agnostic Metaphysics.' In this he recalls sundry of the insuperable difficulties set forth by Dean Mansel, in his *Bampton Lectures*, as arising when we attempt to frame any conception of that which lies beyond the realm of sense. Accepting, as I did, Hamilton's general arguments which Mansel applied to theological conceptions, I contended in *First Principles* that their arguments are valid only on condition that that which transcends the relative is regarded not as negative, but as positive; and that the relative itself becomes unthinkable as such in the absence of a postulated non-relative. Criticisms on my reasoning allied to those made by Mr. Harrison have been made before, and have before been answered by me. To an able metaphysician, the Rev. James Martineau, I made a reply which I may be excused here for reproducing, as I cannot improve upon it: —

Always implying terms in relation, thought implies that both terms shall be more or less defined ; and as fast as one of them becomes indefinite, the relation also becomes indefinite, and thought becomes indistinct. Take the case of magnitudes. I think of an inch ; I think of a foot ; and having tolerably-definite ideas of the two, I have a tolerably-definite idea of the relation between them. I substitute for the foot a mile ; and being able to represent a mile much less definitely, I cannot so definitely think of the relation between an inch and a mile — cannot distinguish it in thought from the relation between an inch and two miles as clearly as I can distinguish in thought the relation between an inch and one foot from the relation between an inch and two feet. And now if I endeavor to think of the relation between an inch and the 240,000 miles from here to the Moon, or the relation between an inch and the 92,000,000 miles from here to the Sun, I find that while these distances, practically inconceivable, have become little more than numbers to which I frame no answering ideas, so, too, has the relation between an inch and either of them become practically inconceivable. Now this partial failure in the process of forming thought-relations, which happens even with finite magnitudes when one of them is immense, passes into complete failure when one of them cannot be brought within any limits. The relation itself becomes unrepresentable at the same time that one of its terms becomes unrepresentable. Nevertheless, in this case it is to be observed that the almost blank form of relation preserves a certain qualitative character. It is still distinguishable as belonging to the consciousness of extensions, not to the consciousness of forces or durations ; and in so far remains a vaguely-identifiable relation. But now suppose we ask what happens when one term of the relation has not simply magnitude having no known limits, and duration of which neither beginning nor end is cognizable, but is also an existence not to be defined ? In other words, what must happen if one term of the relation is not only quantitatively but also qualitatively unrepresentable ? Clearly in this case the relation does not simply cease to be thinkable except as a relation of a certain class, but it lapses completely. When one of the terms becomes wholly unknowable, the law of thought can no longer be conformed to ; both because one term cannot be present, and because relation itself cannot be framed. . . . In brief, then, to Mr. Martineau's objection I reply, that the insoluble difficulties he

indicates arise here, as elsewhere, when thought is applied to that which transcends the sphere of thought; and that just as when we try to pass beyond phenomenal manifestations to the Ultimate Reality manifested, we have to symbolize it out of such materials as the phenomenal manifestations give us; so we have simultaneously to symbolize the connection betweent his Ultimate Reality and its manifestations, as somehow allied to the connections among the phenomenal manifestations themselves. The truth Mr. Martineau's criticism adumbrates, is that the law of thought fails where the elements of thought fail; and this is a conclusion quite conformable to the general view I defend. Still holding the validity of my argument against Hamilton and Mansel, that in pursuance of their own principle the relative is not at all thinkable *as such*, unless in contradistinction to some existence posited, however vaguely, as the other term of a relation, conceived however indefinitely; it is consistent on my part to hold that in this effort which thought inevitably makes to pass beyond its sphere, not only does the product of thought become a dim symbol of a product, but the process of thought becomes a dim symbol of a process; and hence any predicament inferable from the law of thought cannot be asserted.[1]

Thus, then, criticisms like this of Mr. Martineau, often recurring in one shape or other, and now again made by Mr. Harrison, do not show the invalidity of my argument, but once more show the imbecility of human intelligence when brought to bear on the ultimate question. Phenomenon without noumenon is unthinkable; and yet noumenon cannot be thought of in the true sense of thinking. We are at once obliged to be conscious of a reality behind appearance, and yet can neither bring this consciousness of reality into any shape, nor can bring into any shape its connection with appearance. The forms of our thought, moulded on experiences of phenomena, as

[1] *Essays*, vol. iii. pp. 293–6.

well as the connotations of our words formed to express the relations of phenomena, involve us in contradictions when we try to think of that which is beyond phenomena; and yet the existence of that which is beyond phenomena is a necessary datum alike of our thoughts and our words. We have no choice but to accept a formless consciousness of the inscrutable.

I cannot treat with fulness the many remaining issues. To Mr. Harrison's statement that it was uncandid in me to implicate him with the absurdities of the Comtean belief and ritual, notwithstanding his public utterances, I reply that whereas ten years ago I was led to think he gave but a qualified adhesion to Comte's religious doctrine, such public utterances of his as I have read of late years, fervid in their eloquence, persuaded me that he had become a much warmer adherent. On his summary mode of dealing with my criticism of the Comtean creed some comment is called for. He remarks that there are 'good reasons for declining to discuss with Mr. Spencer the writings of Comte;' and names, as the first, 'that he knows [I know] nothing whatever about them' (p. 114). Now as Mr. Harrison is fully aware that thirty years ago I reviewed the English version of those parts of the Positive Philosophy which treat of Mathematics, Astronomy and Physics; and as he has referred to the pamphlet in which, ten years later, I quoted a number of passages from the original to signalize my grounds of dissent from Comte's system;

I am somewhat surprised by this statement, and by the still more emphatic statement that to me 'the writings of Comte are, if not the Absolute Unknowable, at any rate the Absolute Unknown' (p. 114). Doubtless, these assertions are effective; but like many effective assertions they do not sufficiently recognize the facts. The remaining statements in this division of Mr. Harrison's argument, I pass over: not because answers equally adequate with those I have thus far given do not exist, but because I cannot give them without entering upon personal questions which I prefer to avoid.

On the closing part of 'Agnostic Metaphysics,' containing Mr. Harrison's own version of the Religion of Humanity, I have to remark, as I find others remarking, that it amounts, if not to an abandonment of his original position, still to an entire change of front. Anxious, as he has professed himself, to retain the 'magnificent word Religion' (p. 42), it now appears that when 'the Religion of Humanity' is spoken of, the usual connotations of the word are to be in large measure dropped: to give it these connotations is to 'foist in theological ideas where none are suggested by us' (p. 121). While, in his first article, one of the objections raised to the 'Neo-Theisms,' as well as 'the Unknowable,' was that there is offered 'no relation whatever between worshipper and worshipped' (p. 44) (an objection tacitly implying that Mr. Harrison's religion supplies this relation), it now appears that Humanity is not to be worshipped in any ordinary sense; but that by worship is simply meant

'intelligent love and respect for our human brotherhood,' and that, 'in plain words, the Religion of Humanity means recognizing your duty to your fellow man on human grounds' (p. 122). Certainly this is much less than what I and others supposed to be included in Mr. Harrison's version of the Religion of Humanity. If he preaches nothing more than an ecstatic philanthropy, few will object; but most will say that his name for it conveyed to them a much wider meaning. Passing over all this, however, I am concerned chiefly to point out another extreme misrepresentation made by Mr. Harrison when discussing my criticism of Comte's assertion that 'veneration and gratitude' are due to the Great Being Humanity. After showing why I conceive 'veneration and gratitude' are not due to Humanity, I supposed an opponent to exclaim (putting the passage within quotation marks), 'But surely "veneration and gratitude" are due somewhere,' since civilized society with all its products 'must be credited to some agency or other.' [This apostrophe, imagined as coming from a disciple of Comte, Mr. Harrison, on p. 129, actually represents as made in my own person!] To this apostrophe I have replied (p. 83) that 'if "veneration and gratitude" are due at all, they are due to that Ultimate Cause from which Humanity, individually and as a whole, in common with all other things, has proceeded.' Whereupon Mr. Harrison changes my hypothetical statement into an actual statement. He drops the '*if*,' and represents me as positively affirming that 'veneration and gratitude'

are due somewhere: saying that Mr. Spencer 'lavishes his "veneration and gratitude," called out by the sum of human civilization, upon his Unknowable and Inconceivable Postulate' (p. 129). I should have thought that even the most ordinary reader, much more Mr. Harrison, would have seen that the argument is entirely an argument *ad hominem*. I deliberately and carefully guarded myself by the '*if*' against the ascription to me of any opinion, one way or the other: being perfectly conscious that much is to be said for and against. The optimist will unhesitatingly affirm that veneration and gratitude are due; while by the pessimist it will be contended that they are not due. One who dwells exclusively on what Emerson calls 'the saccharine' principle in things, as illustrated for example in the adaptation of living beings to their conditions — the becoming callous to pains that have to be borne, and the acquirement of liking for labors that are necessary — may think there are good reasons for veneration and gratitude. Contrariwise, these sentiments may be thought inappropriate by one who contemplates the fact that there are some thirty species of parasites which prey upon man, possessing elaborate appliances for maintaining their hold on or within his body, and having enormous degrees of fertility proportionate to the small individual chances their germs have of getting into him and torturing him. Either view may be supported by masses of evidence; and knowing this I studiously avoided complicating the issue by taking either side. As any one may see who refers back,

my sole purpose was that of showing the absurdity of thinking that 'veneration and gratitude' are due to the product and not to the producer. Yet Mr. Harrison, having changed my proposition, '*if* they are due,' etc., into the proposition 'they are due,' etc., laughs over the contradictions in my views which he deduces, and to which he time after time recurs, commenting on my 'astonishing perversity.'

In this division of Mr. Harrison's article occur five other cases in which, after his manner, propositions are made to appear untenable or ludicrous; though any one who refers to them as expressed by me will find them neither the one nor the other. But to show all this would take much trouble to small purpose. Indeed, I must here close the discussion, so far as my own desistance enables me. It is a wearisome and profitless business, this of continually going back on the record, now to show that the ideas ascribed to me are not the ideas I expressed, and now to show that the statements my opponent defends are not statements that he originally made. A controversy always opens side issues. Each new issue becomes the parent of further ones. The original questions become obscured in a swarm of collateral questions; and energies, in my case ill-spared, are wasted to little purpose.

Before closing, however, let me again point out that nothing has been said which calls for change of the views expressed in my first article.

Setting out with the statement that, 'unlike the

ordinary consciousness, the religious consciousness is concerned with that which lies beyond the sphere of sense,' I went on to show that the rise of this consciousness begins among primitive men with the belief in a double belonging to each individual, which, capable of wandering away from him during life, becomes his ghost or spirit after death; and that from this idea of a being eventually distinguished as supernatural, there develop, in course of time, the ideas of supernatural beings of all orders up to the highest. Mr. Harrison has alleged that the primitive religion is not belief in and propitiation of the ghost, but is worship of 'physical objects treated frankly as physical objects' (p. 31). That he has disproved the one view and proved the other, no one will, I think, assert. Contrariwise, he has given occasion for me to cite weighty authorities against him.

Next it was contended that in the assemblage of supernatural beings thus originating in each tribe, some, derived from chiefs, were superior to others; and that, as the compounding and re-compounding of tribes gave origin to societies having social grades and rulers of different orders, there resulted that conception of a hierarchy of ghosts or gods which polytheism shows us. Further it was argued that while, with the growth of civilization and knowledge, the minor supernatural agents became merged in the major supernatural agent, this single great supernatural agent, gradually losing the anthropomorphic attributes at first ascribed, has come in our days to retain but few of them; and, eventually losing these,

will then merge into a consciousness of an Omnipresent Power to which no attributes can be ascribed. This proposition has not been contested.

In pursuance of the belief that the religious consciousness naturally arising, and thus gradually transformed, would not disappear wholly, but that, 'however much changed, it must continue to exist,' it was argued that the sentiments which had grown up around the conception of a personal God, though modified when that conception was modified into the conception of a Power which cannot be known or conceived, would not be destroyed. It was held that there would survive, and might even increase, the sentiments of wonder and awe in presence of a Universe of which the origin and nature, meaning and destiny, can neither be known nor imagined; or that, to quote a statement afterwards employed, there must survive those emotions 'which are appropriate to the consciousness of a Mystery that cannot be fathomed and a Power that is omnipresent.' This proposition has not been disproved; nor, indeed, has any attempt been made to disprove it.

Instead of assaults on these propositions to which alone I am committed, there have been assaults on various propositions gratuitously attached to them; and then the incongruities evolved have been represented as incongruities for which I am responsible.

I end by pointing out, as I pointed out before, that, 'while the things I have said have not been disproved, the things which have been disproved are things I have not said.'

HERBERT SPENCER.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER AND AGNOSTICISM.

As I do not intend to continue the discussion to which Mr. Herbert Spencer in the 'Nineteenth Century' challenges me to return, it may be becoming that I say so in public, and accept his third paper as closing the debate. *Sat prata biberunt.* The public has had enough; and if we pursue it further they will think us like the children whose disputes have passed into the stage of 'did!' 'didn't!' I am well content to leave to Mr. Spencer the last 'didn't.'

I see he is still multiplying 'weighty authorities' to convince me of what I never denied — namely, that in a very early stage of mental development men come to imagine 'ghosts' and spirits. What I assert is that there is a phase of mind even earlier; when living and inert qualities, animal and human, are not clearly distinguished. And all Mr. Spencer's new authorities, the nameless 'Magistrate of Gorakhpur,' the Comte Goblet D'Alviella, and the rest, leave me still impenitent. The witness of Jews and Arabs, men in an advanced stage of Theism, is obviously irrelevant; and the Comte D'Alviella, who has already sent me his little work, 'Harrison contre

Spencer,' repudiates the 'ghost' theory, and says that, with Réville, he believes that 'religion began with the worship of natural objects.' The Comte Goblet is a very Balaam, the son of Peor.

Does any man in his senses really deny that in the extreme infancy of the mind there is a point when the conception of 'ghosts' has not emerged? Does a baby believe in ghosts? Do animals? All the anonymous collectors, from Gorakhpur to Boggley Wollah, will never persuade me of this. As I write my tabby kitten is playing with a ball, which she evidently takes to be alive. Does the kitten fancy there is the 'ghost' of a mouse inside the ball? Of course not: she thinks the ball itself is a kind of mouse, or has mousey ways. There we have Fetichism preceding Spiritualism.

I have certainly cast no insinuations whatever on the three conscientious gentlemen who carried out Mr. Spencer's directions to tabulate 'all classes of facts.' But it is too much to ask me to believe either that they knew nothing of Mr. Spencer's theories, or that they did not tabulate such facts as they judged would be most useful to him. One would as easily believe that, when Mr. Gladstone's secretary is directed to tabulate electoral facts, he has not the least idea whether the Premier is about to use them in favor of reform or against it. And then, would not the philosopher's three 'ghosts' (as they said in the Belt trial) naturally incline to the 'ghost' origin of all things?

On one point I certainly did misunderstand Mr.

Spencer, and that in all good faith. When he said, 'if veneration and gratitude are due at all,' I confess that I took him to admit that they are due. He now says that is not his meaning. Be it so. But if his view of religion is that veneration and gratitude have no part in it, that it has no object, and is 'altogether unconcerned' with devotion, hope, worship, and consolation, the pertinent question occurs — Why all these chapters and articles about religion at all? In Mr. Spencer's philosophy, one would think, the chapter on religion is like the famous chapter on the snakes in Iceland, or the connection between the Old and the New Testament, which, we used to be told, was a blank page.

Mr. Spencer and other critics of mine are now concerned to find that I am 'changing my front' — am not an orthodox Positivist, in fact. My 'orthodoxy' is surely my own concern, not theirs. As I have never at any time pretended to regard the writings of Comte as canonical, or surrendered my own duty to use them intelligently, I do not know what 'orthodoxy' in the matter can mean. As to 'change of front,' it is nonsense. If people now find that I do not adopt views that were attributed to me, the reason is, not that I have changed my views, but that opinions were attributed to me without any good ground. One lively person, Mr. W. Ward, I think, quoted some words which I used in 1880, and contrasted them with the very different language, he said, that I used in September last at Newton Hall. It so happens that in September last I did repeat the

very same words which I used in 1880, and which Mr. Ward now tells me I had recanted. They happen to come from a form of address which I have repeated scores of times at Newton Hall ever since it was opened. This is conclusive, I think, that my language has never varied. But I cannot discuss with those who will not take the trouble to inform themselves of simple facts, and who tell the world that on a particular occasion I repudiated language which I did there and then publicly use.

Mr. Spencer is surprised that I should say he does not know Comte's writings. I will give my reasons. Comte's writings consist of eight principal works, dating from 1830 to 1856. Of these, I have reason to believe, Mr. Spencer has read through none except the first, completed in 1842, and that in an abridged translation. In 1864, many years after Comte's death, and twelve years after Comte had finally settled his classification of the sciences, Mr. Spencer wrote a work on 'The Classification of the Sciences, and Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte.' Throughout this work Mr. Spencer speaks of Comte as making six sciences. Now, in all Comte's works, except the first, he makes seven sciences. The seven sciences are the A B C of Positivism; in Newton Hall, or any other Positivist school, tables of the seven sciences may be seen; and they occur in tens of thousands of Positivist publications, English and French. Yet for twenty years Mr. Spencer has gone on reprinting his 'Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte,' with-

out an inkling of the fact that for thirty-two years Comte's works speak of seven, not six, sciences as the foundation of his philosophy. Mr. Spencer reprints the work last October, still with the same blunder. It is as if a writer on the British Constitution persisted in talking about the four estates of the Realm, or as if a man should dissent from the Church of England on the ground of her having forty-nine Articles of Religion.

To the reprint of the 'Reasons,' etc., published last October, Mr. Spencer has added one appendix, wherein he sets forth, in sixteen propositions, the cardinal principles of his Synthetic Philosophy, and he challenges us to say whether they are drawn from Comte. I will satisfy him amply. So far as I know, they are none of them drawn from Comte. Nay, as I understand it, no rational Positivist would accept them at all in the absolute, objective form in which they are put.

The sixteen theses, which Mr. Spencer has nailed on the door of the Temple of the Unknowable, claim to be an explanation of the Universe. They open, like the book of Genesis, with the words: 'Throughout the Universe in general and in detail, there is, etc., etc. . . . ;' and then they assert that Evolution, Heterogeneity, Integration, Differentiation, Instability, Segregation, Equilibration, Dissolution, Persistence, the Unknowable, and so forth, account for the Universe as a whole and all its details, organic and inorganic, physical, social, and mental. Now Positivism looks on all explanations of the

Universe as unphilosophical. Comte attempted to methodize our knowledge and our inquiries. If Mr. Spencer had done nothing but give us an explanation of the Universe, I should not be his constant reader, or count him in the first rank of living philosophers. I care little for the sixteen theses, which are too absolute and pan-Cosmogonical for me. They sound to me like the first verse of the Pentateuch or the Fourth Gospel. Milton preferred the 'Paradise Regained' to the 'Paradise Lost,' and the great Frederic valued himself on his sonnets and his flute.

If the Synthetic Philosophy were really reduced to Segregation and the fifteen other dogmas, two worlds would not combine to honor the name of Herbert Spencer. It is held in such high honor because they find in his works a really unequalled grasp in the co-ordination of ideas, a positive method which rarely stumbles, a vast fertility of illustration, and a supreme gift for perceiving the harmonies between nature and society. Like the alchemists and realists of old, Mr. Spencer has done a great work when he was seeking something else. He has not explained the Universe, but he has given this age a mass of philosophic suggestions, which we, professed followers of Auguste Comte, most heartily and respectfully welcome, and the analogies of which with Positivism we are the first to acknowledge.

FREDERIC HARRISON.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO HERBERT SPENCER.

THE significant point is that the Gospel *is* according to Herbert Spencer.

It has been the fate of Mr. Spencer to be widely adjudged at second hand. Multitudes know him chiefly through arguments in rebuttal, generally from ecclesiastical sources. Thousands of church-folk have seen Mr. Spencer demolished, who never saw Mr. Spencer. His books are learned and presumably hard to be understood. He is the leading mind of Agnosticism, and on that question a great majority of us are Agnostics. But we have a firm though vague idea that Mr. Spencer would turn our worship upside down; would abolish heaven, annihilate God, enthrone an abstraction, and, in short, that he is a good man to keep away from.

His late essays in the 'Nineteenth Century Magazine,' make such a notion henceforth inexcusable. In a few pages, not tedious, not even long, he gives an intelligible account of himself. It is not necessary to be familiar with his theory. An honorable life

may be passed without knowing his views; but if one assumes to hold, still more to express an opinion of them, although he be the most hurried citizen of the United States, he has no excuse for not fashioning it intelligently from these latest words of Mr. Spencer himself — brief, terse, simple, the gathered wisdom of his life-long search, the ripened and mellow growth of his most fruitful years.

Carefully reading these sober, gentle, and patient pages, the wonder grows that theology should ever have had any quarrel with their author. Accurately scanned, thoughtfully judged, as is demanded by the large lines on which his scrutiny moves, they make it strange that he is not regarded as the strongest earthly prop which revealed religion has yet secured. If the church could know in this her day the things that make for lasting peace and real progress, she would not only welcome but claim Herbert Spencer as her most timely and vigorous ally, whether he bears her banner, or, as an independent sharp-shooter, disables her foes simply by the way. For this is what he has done; he has given to theology firm standing-ground in science. He has come upon heaven by the mountain path and the postern gate. From atom and fire-mist, through rock and star, to the holy spirit of man he has pursued his steadfast and stately way, till he stands side by side with prophet and apostle in the presence of the living God. And all along the way his feet are beautiful upon the mountains, because, though the voice that cried to him in the wilderness was the voice of science, it none the less impelled

and inspired him to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

So far as appears in this summary of his philosophy, which is all that we are now to examine, what he affirms of theology is its divine essence: what he dismisses from theology is the mere human *ana*, the dust and cobweb of the accumulated centuries, the defacements and disfigurements caused by loving as well by hating hearts, by keen as well as by dull minds. There is no possible reconciliation of science and religion, for they have never been at war. All that is true in religion and all that is true in science are but parts of the great plan of creation, absolutely harmonious. It is nescience, not science, that clashes. Error always rattles. Truth fits firmly into place. Knowledge is the great peace-maker. It has been Mr. Spencer's mission to dispel error by research, to give a scientific support to the convictions of faith, to prove beyond question that the ultimate conclusion of science is the supreme God of religion.

It is not necessary, as it is not possible, to delay along the processes which have been the noble life-work of Mr. Spencer. It is his conclusion in which we are vitally interested. As the last word of science its importance cannot be exaggerated: 'Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain to the man of science the absolute certainty that he is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.'

Does not every Christian recognize this as the God

whom he worships? Not the whole of God, indeed, but wholly God. Mr. Spencer does not say God. That is not his method. Perhaps his testimony would be less valuable if he did say it. God is a term of theology, and he writes as a philosopher. The strong point is that science, purely and honestly besought without regard to theology, bears witness of an Energy, omnipresent, the Creator of all things.

It is hardly possible to overestimate the magnitude of this conclusion. With singleness of purpose, with a passion of pursuit, with trained research, sometimes even with unscientific desires, science has hunted for the secret of life. Now she formally relinquishes the search. She avows that she cannot penetrate the secret. She can find life nowhere except from antecedent life. Behind matter in every form is always force. At the end of every avenue, bounding every vista, the most untiring student finds himself still confronting life: life so pervasive, so powerful, that he is fain to call it by the most living name of life — life in its mightiest form — strength in action — Energy.

But far back in the undated night of antiquity this same word was spoken which science has uttered today. The Genesis of the Universe in the Revelation of the Bible and the Genesis of the Universe in the Revelation of Herbert Spencer are one and the same: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' The very word used for God is a Spencerian rather than a theological word — Elohim, the God of Strength, the Strong One, the All-mighty, the Energy.

God is an Anglo-Saxon word, of late origin, not the Elohim, the Energy, of Genesis. The God of the first Revelation is not Goodness, but Energy. If Mr. Spencer's Energy is an Agnostic abstraction, so is the Elohim of the Hebrews. If the testimony of science through Mr. Spencer is to be received, the testimony of the Bible cannot be refused, on the plea that it is called Revelation or that it is an old wives' fable. The old wives have established their claim to be heard when the young men tell the same story. Behind all the life of man and plant and planet, the first welter of worlds, the shifting play of atoms, the Scriptures, which are called Sacred, just as firmly and positively as the Scriptures which are called Scientific, place the Infinite Energy, the Allmighty, the Essential Life, Life in Itself. Mr. Spencer reached his conclusion by skilled study of the Phenomenal Universe with the brain which had proceeded to him from the Infinite Energy. Holy men of old spake moved by the Holy Ghost, which also proceeded forth and came from God. The story is the same. The claims are the same. Together they must stand or fall.

It is not necessary that he who wrote the olden legend should know its scientific bearings. It is not necessary that Mr. Spencer should recognize or admit the religious bearings of his conclusions. Facts exist independent of our regards. The writer of Genesis may well have been ignorant of the multiplied universes, the unnumbered star-dust which constituted his 'heavens.' Mr. Spencer, with all his Christian

forbearance, may be one of the unconscious disciples who, in the rapturous surprise of some heavenly dawn, will wonderingly ask: 'When saw we thee an hungered and fed thee?' but none the less along the darkness he lures to brighter worlds and leads the way, and none the less in their smaller world the ancients discerned the Eternal Energy whence the widest worlds proceed.

Undoubtedly that phase of Mr. Spencer's philosophy that seems to show the greatest divergence from the common theology, and to create the gravest mistrust in the minds of the church, is his refusal to ascribe to this Creative Energy, will, intelligence, personality, consciousness. Seeing such a statement, it is not strange that the devout, but unlearned and mentally untrained Christian should cry out in bitterness of soul: 'They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.' What is strange is that our theological leaders, whose business it is to read intelligently, to think logically, to represent accurately, should not only join but raise the cry. The great leaders of the Bible never neglected such an opportunity. They fortified themselves with every principle and every person that could be gathered to their support from friend or foe. Partly because they were socially weak, partly because they were morally strong, they struck hands with the truth whether it came from the world without or the world within. When Paul was in Athens his spirit was stirred at seeing the city wholly given to idolatry, but while he waited there he carefully

studied the situation, and when the learning and culture as well as the ignorance and idolatry of the city gathered into his audience at the Areopagus, his quick eye had already seen the point of vantage, and with one swift, deft movement he swept the Agnostics into his ranks against the idolaters. Passing by every Mars and Mercury which had stirred his soul, he caught at the one element common to his faith and theirs, and, with a courtliness which is not only lost in our translation but is debased into an unpardonable and un-Pauline *brusquerie*, he disarms them by agreement and conciliates them by compliment. The common rumor had charged him with being a setter-forth of strange gods. He assures them, on the contrary, that he has come to preach a God whom they already worship. From among all their array of Deities he selects the one true Substance, the one Divine Entity, the Unknown God, vague perhaps, but untrammelled by error, and holds him before them as the God of the Universe. There is no mistaking his meaning. It is the Agnostic God. The very word that fell from Paul's own lips is Ἀγνώστῳ (Agnosto). Whom therefore ye agnostically (ἀγνοοῦντες) worship, him declare I unto you. He did not preach the Agnosticism of God, but he set forth the character, the attributes, the will of the Agnostic God. He made the Unknown known. Neither against them nor for them did he quote Moses and the prophets, who had no authority among them, but he showed himself and the Agnostics to be in common holding what their own poets sung: We

are all his offspring. In Pauline phrase he uttered the Spencerian philosophy as acknowledged Greek truth: God made the world and all things therein: The Lord is not far from every one of us: Everywhere we are in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed; that Power of which man and the world are products, and which is manifested through man and the world from instant to instant: In Him we live and move and have our being: Our lives, alike physical and mental, in common with all the activities, organic and inorganic, amid which we live, are but the workings of this Power. — It is only by the style, not by the doctrine, that we can tell St. Paul from St. Herbert. Thus, pressing into his service all the available truth of Greek philosophy and Greek poetry, he was ready to throw himself with redoubled force, though with undiminished politeness, against the falsehood and corruption of idolatry. Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device; while, recognizing the slow evolution of religion, he admits that the time of this ignorance God winked at.

Those, therefore, with whom Paul is authority, must agree that by this courteous and free acceptance of the truth of the heathen philosophers, he proves all truth to be consecrated and divine. If Paul could preach an unknown God as a basis of theology, the Pulpit cannot be wrong in doing the same thing.

Again, in addressing the Romans, he not only assents but insists that the mountain path and the postern gate are legitimate roads to heaven. That which may be known of God is manifest in them — Gentile as well as Jew, *for God hath showed it unto them.* How? Precisely in the Herbert Spencer way: *The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead,* infinite and eternal Energy.

Peter, impetuous, uncultivated, reared in the strongest Jewish prejudices, and believing that his nation was chosen of God because of its special merits and not because of its special qualities, was forced to utter the same truth. It is hardly possible that he could have understood. It must have seemed to him a confusion of inherent distinctions. But he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, and declared, if a little reluctantly: 'I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.'

Cornelius was a just man, a gentleman, a Roman soldier, an officer in a Roman legion, a man of the world — distinguished from idolaters in that he feared one God; but he had found him by way of the Roman army and polite society. Yet Peter assures us that he had found God and was accepted with God.

James, also a servant of God, teaches a wider doctrine; utters the principle which underlies all:

'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning?' 'If we ask,' says Mr. Spencer, 'whence come the structure and functions of humanity even in its highest development, it still owes whatever there is in it of beauty to that Infinite and Eternal Energy.'

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Mr. Spencer is in accord with James. The way of Herbert Spencer to God is not only justified but confirmed. Science is not only recognized but signalized as a guide to heaven. The inspiration of the philosopher is established out of the Book of Inspiration. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, that they shall be all taught of God. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. Who is he that shall preach another spirit, another Gospel?

Let no one, then, fear that Mr. Spencer is ruling God out of his Universe, for that is exactly what he is not doing. On the contrary, his great work is finding God; is showing that Science, step by step, just as Revelation by authority, reveals God supreme. Nowhere so plainly and grandly as from his pages are Science and Revelation seen to be the two pillars, symmetrical, immovable, above all things harmonious, which upbear the majesty of the Eternal Throne. Speaking after the manner of Swedenborg, we might rather say they are the two sides of Jacob's ladder reaching from earth to heaven, whereon may

be seen the angels ascending and descending. They compose the great electric circle of the Universe, one arc mounting from earth to heaven, the other coursing from heaven to earth.

The ancients strained language to the uttermost to represent the greatness of God. Mr. Spencer relinquishes language in despair, but he does not relinquish God. He refuses to affirm of this Energy, personality, will, intelligence, consciousness; but it is because these are terms of human thought, and the Ultimate Energy transcends human thought. He will not belittle God. He will not say that this Energy is intelligent; not because it may be unintelligent, but because it is so far beyond all possible meanings of the word intelligent, that intelligence is indeed an idle word. And when we think of our own minds; of the difficulty we have in bringing our little plans to bear; and then turn to the unnumbered Universes of worlds, thrilling with vitality, equally adequate and perfect in the scale of the butterfly's wing, which only the microscope can discern, and the tint of the rosy star, which only the telescope can lure out of the depth of the inconceivable heavens; and small and great and near and far swinging through space with all the precision of mathematics and all the rhythm of music and all the freedom of life — why, we cannot think that Mr. Spencer is over-cautious. The Power that ordains this mighty symphony is so far beyond the fitful gleam which we call mind that perhaps the utmost stretch of mind is to call it the Unknowable. Submitting

with humility to the limits of human intelligence, Mr. Spencer avers that the choice is not between personality and something lower, but between personality and something higher; not that the Energy is impersonal, but that it transcends personality. Consciousness he declines to affirm, because the very limits of consciousness disappear as human thought mounts towards its source. 'The Ultimate Power is no more representable in terms of human consciousness than human consciousness is representable in terms of a planet's functions; yet an indestructible consciousness of it is the very basis of all intelligence. To say that because the Infinite Energy from which all things proceed cannot in any way be brought within the limits of human consciousness, it therefore approaches a nonentity, seems to me like one who says of a vast number, that because it passes all possibility of enumeration, it is like nothing, which is also innumerable.'

With constant care, with a painstaking which it would seem impossible to elude, Mr. Spencer seeks to guard against the tendency which he foresees to represent him as banishing God from the Universe. Both against the Churchman who fears that he will, and the Positivist who fears that he will not, he calmly maintains that so far from regarding that which transcends phenomena as the All-Nothingness, he regards it as the All-Being. The Unknowable is the Ultimate Reality. It is unknowable in the sense that it cannot be held within the limits of the human intelligence, and not in the sense that it

cannot be present to the human consciousness. He insists that belief in its existence has, among our beliefs, the highest validity of any. His Agnosticism confesses inability to know the nature of the Power manifested through phenomena, but it avows the existence of that Power to be of all things most certain.

'Is it not just possible,' he suggests, 'that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will as these transcend mechanical motion? . . . Have we not seen how utterly incompetent our minds are to form even an approach to a conception of that which underlies all phenomena? Is it not proved that this incompetency is the incompetency of the conditioned to grasp the unconditioned? Does it not follow that the Ultimate Cause cannot in any respect be conceived by us because it is in every respect greater than can be conceived?'

Has theology any quarrel with this devout and humble student finding in many mazes no certain pathway, but holding fast to his fragile and slender clew of truth, penetrating the wilderness of the ages, which trembles under his tread into teeming life, till he stands reverent and silent in the Incomprehensible Presence? Certainly the Bible has no quarrel with him.

Out of the unconsuming fire the truth of Herbert Spencer was burnt into the older world — the self-existence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy — not to be held in human definition — I AM THAT I AM. In that oldest of books, the spirited and splendid

drama of Job, the Unknowable is placed as far beyond human ken as by Mr. Spencer. Touching the All-mighty, we cannot find him out. 'Behold! God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.' We cannot say of this Energy, personality, consciousness, by reason of the outer darkness which lies beyond the little lamp of the human mind. So vividly did this Energy picture itself on the poet's vision that he represents it as speaking out of the whirlwind to accentuate the inability of human intelligence to grasp the Unknowable. 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? Where is the way where light dwelleth? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who giveth understanding to the heart? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' So with swift touch but iron grasp the furthest heavens and the deep spirit of man are gathered to the feet of the Infinite Energy which doeth great things and unsearchable.

To the Prophet Isaiah came a voice which he thought was the voice of the Infinite and Eternal Energy: 'I am the Lord. There is none else. I am the first and I am the last. I form the light and create darkness. I have made the earth and created man upon it. I have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded. I am the Lord, that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the

heavens above; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.'

Just as positively, if not as picturesquely, Paul maintained the unknowableness of the Infinite Energy. 'Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; but how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Who hath known the mind of the Lord?'

The earliest poet and the greatest prophet, the last apostle and the latest philosopher, agree in declaring that the Infinite Energy, from which all things proceed, cannot be comprehended by human faculties; is the Unknowable.

Still another step Mr. Spencer takes along the road of science, and finds the Infinite Energy to be not only creative but, inferentially, good. Fully recognizing the evil that is in the Universe, he recognizes as fully that, on the whole, evolution is from the lower to the higher. 'If we take the highest product of evolution, civilized human society, and ask to what agency all its marvels must be credited, if we take the highest form which civilized society will ever attain, still we must owe it all to that Infinite and Eternal Energy, out of which humanity has quite recently emerged, and into which it must, in course of time, subside.' This is purely scriptural in its ascription of all praise to God; in its assertion that humanity with all its power of improvement came from God, and, of limited duration, will one day revert to its source. *I*, and I alone, *am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and*

the last. The heavens shall pass away, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. We differ, if indeed we do differ, from Mr. Spencer, only in looking for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Here, however, may be noted almost the sole misrepresentation in Mr. Spencer's essays of which we have to complain. Among religious beliefs which must die out, he places belief in a Power which 'should be seized with a craving for praise; and having created mankind, should be angry with them if they do not perpetually tell him how great he is.' This seems like a little incursion into the brilliant rhetorical domains of Mr. Frederic Harrison, and is wholly unlike the trustworthy simplicity, veracity, and logic of Mr. Spencer. Where does Mr. Spencer find such a Power? Not in the Bible surely. The Power of the Bible is distinctly declared not to dwell in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. The inspiration of the Bible is a divine unselfishness. God is angry; but he is always angry with wickedness, which debases man. He demands worship, but it is to exalt the nature of man, not His own. Even through the obscuring medium of unspiritual minds, he is seen to be a Being who lavishes himself on humanity for its elevation. Mr. Spencer himself is at one with the Creative Power in trying to draw men from degrading worship of the created and of symbols, to a devout contemplation of the Creator.

Here also does Mr. Spencer rise to the height of his great argument? 'Our lives, alike physical and mental, are but the workings of the Ultimate Power.' Why not moral? The Ultimate Energy must contain, in essence and puissance, everything which is manifest in the Phenomenal Universe not only of matter but of mind, not only of mind but of character, the energy of love as well as the energy of force. Character is the highest development of humanity. Love is the strongest power of the Phenomenal Universe. If not as pervasive as energy, it is as pervasive as life. Highest of energies, belonging only to the spirit, all life reddens with its dawn, but only the living soul basks in its full radiance, the risen sun of the whole Spiritual Universe. If there may be a mode of being as much transcending intelligence and will as these transcend mechanical motion, why should there not be a mode of being equally transcending love? Why should not Mr. Spencer say as the legitimate outcome of his philosophy, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of the Being who transcends love? John, less hampered by verbal or philosophical limitations, says simply, 'God is love.' He feels the inadequacy of the word, and strengthens it to its utmost possibilities. God is not merely loving. He is so loving that he is love itself. This is the nearest that human language can get to the infinite quality which Mr. Spencer may decline to

designate, but which he cannot deny. Love, no less than life, springs from that Eternal and Infinite Energy which is the source of all things.

Do I seem to be thrusting Mr. Spencer against his will into the Kingdom of Heaven? I have a right to do it. He has no monopoly of the truths which he discovers, which he arranges, but which he does not create or control. He is himself as much a part of the divine Order of the Universe as is the law of gravitation, and in the evolution of religion he must go where he belongs, and does not inevitably belong where he wishes to go. He cannot deny himself to teleology any more than he can deny a stone or a star.

It is only fair to say that he shows no reluctance to take his appropriate place. He indicates, indeed, not only willingness but intention to occupy common ground with theology, and distinctly points out the place where he is to be found. 'My argument was that in the discovery by Science that it could not do more than ascertain the order among phenomena, there was involved a tacit confession of impotence in presence of the Mystery of Things — a confession which brought Science into sympathy with Religion; and that in their joint recognition of an Unknowable Cause for all the effects constituting the knowable world, Religion and Science would reach a truth common to the two. . . . I held at the outset, and continue to hold, that this inscrutable existence which Science, in the last resort, is compelled to recognize as unreached by its deepest analysis of

matter, motion, thought, and feeling, stands towards our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the Creative Power asserted by Theology, and that when Theology, which has already dropped many of the anthropomorphic traits ascribed, eventually drops the last of them, the foundation-beliefs of the two must become identical. . . . This reality transcending appearance, standing towards the Universe and towards ourselves in the same relation as an anthropomorphic Creator was supposed to stand, bears a like relation with it not only to human thought but to human feeling; the gradual replacement of a Power allied to humanity in certain traits, by a Power which we cannot say is thus allied, leaves unchanged certain of the sentiments comprehended under the name of religion. There must ever survive those which are appropriate to the consciousness of a Mystery which can never be fathomed and a Power that is omnipresent. To suppose that this relatively-evanescent form of existence ought to occupy our minds so exclusively as to leave no space for a consciousness of that Ultimate Existence of which it is but one form out of multitudes — an Ultimate Existence which was manifested in infinitely-varied ways before humanity arose, and will be manifested in infinitely-varied ways when humanity has ceased to be, seems very strange — to me, indeed, amazing.'

This is not the language of Sam Jones, or of Evangelist Hammond; I would to God it were!

But if the Infinite Energy be so far beyond human

ability that human words fail when applied to it, how can that Energy be the God that made man in his own image?

Even to this, Philosophy framed the answer before the question was formulated. With trained sensitiveness of touch to truth, following his slender clew from the first groping of primitive man, Mr. Spencer discovers the final outcome of that rude original speculation to be that the Power manifested throughout the Universe distinguished as material is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness. Or, to present it in the opposite order, 'the power which manifests itself in consciousness is but a differently-conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness.' But the Energy within consciousness is humanity and the Energy that transcends consciousness is God, and this Energy, says Mr. Spencer, is the same. In the image of God made he him. Beloved, now are we indeed the sons of God, for Herbert Spencer affirms it.

The one is the language of social intercourse, of living literature, of vivid poetry; the other is the technology of metaphysics, but clear shining through both is the radiant truth that man — alone of all created things — is like unto God. Therein is life. 'Because I live ye shall live also.'

> 'The wish that of the living whole
> No life may fail beyond the grave,
> Derives it not from what we have
> The likest God within the soul?'

Where Mr. Spencer says that the Infinite Energy is the unknown cause of which the entire Cosmos is a manifestation, the Psalmist says, the Heavens declare the glory of God. From David we call it revelation, and after Mr. Spencer we call it manifestation; but manifestation is the Revelation of Science and revelation is the Manifestation of Religion. Behind both, the Lord our God is one Lord.

An Evolution of the Universe, especially an Evolution of Religion, seems to some the abnegation of religion. Nothing is more ungrounded. The way in which God communicates with men, the way in which the Infinite Energy permeates humanity with a consciousness of itself, the way in which noumenon causes phenomena is the Divine and true way, whether men have discovered it or have imagined some other way. The Lord is righteous in *all* his ways. Salvation is of the Jews; but in all the ages and all the peoples, among which the history of the Jewish nation is but a tarn on the highlands of an ancient continent, with one little rill leading to our later levels — did God leave himself without witness? Granting, what we do not now discuss, that there was a special Hebrew Revelation, does that preclude all other manifestations of the Infinite to the finite? Does the absolute Reality stand in no relation to human beings unless they have Abraham to their father? Verily I say unto you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. That is precisely what he has done. Out of the stones and the stars and the fishes and the beasts, by

geology and biology and astronomy, God has raised up men to testify of him by the way of science, just as truly as he reared the Jewish nation to testify of him by way of another Revelation. He lives through all life, extends through all extent, spreads undivided, operates unspent. If among the ancient peoples the spirit of man was led by slow steps, through the workings of his own mind, through the consciousness of his own soul up to the consciousness of a great soul brooding over the universe, an Infinite Energy creating and sustaining all things, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Because life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel, shall man be forbidden to mount

> 'the great world's altar-stairs,
> That slope thro' darkness up to God?'

It is as irreligious in theology to profane science and to deny God in history as it can be in science to profane theology and to deny God in Christ. The Lord our God is one Lord. If He hid some truths from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes centuries before the wise and prudent found them out, it is not that the babes may scorn the wise and prudent. Still less is it that the babes may plume themselves on their babyhood and think wisdom and prudence of small account. It is just as likely to be because the ignorant, silly babes could never have found it out of themselves, for all their need, while the firm feet could trace the long hard road that leads through darkness up to God. And when the

strong man comes panting, torn, worn, but smiling still, out of the wilderness of rock and quagmire and precipice and torrent and tangle through which he has spent his life in finding the right way, and comes suddenly upon the children of light playing in the courtyard of heaven, is it for them to jeer at him and belittle his work, saying scornfully, 'We have always been here'? Still less is it for them to frown and rebuke him for wickedness in threading and studying the wilderness, which is as truly a part of the kingdom of heaven as the pleasant garden which He gave to His Beloved, sleeping. Wisdom and discernment, the power to see and to reason are among God's best gifts. Such extraordinary, generous seeking as has been Mr. Spencer's life-work is high. Few can attain unto it. If the Infinite Energy, creating few Spencers but many babes, filled their outstretched, lame hands of faith and hope with full assurance, let them joy in God, and rejoice in the God of their salvation; but let them nevertheless put off their shoes from off their feet when they turn to Herbert Spencer, for the place whereon he stands is also holy ground.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO FREDERIC HARRISON.

So far as quality indicates order of Evolution, Mr. Harrison must be placed some æons preceding Mr. Spencer. He is characterized as the ablest English representative of Comte's Positive Philosophy. If this is true, Positive Philosophy is in a bad way. Certainly, in his replies to Mr. Spencer, its ablest English representative shows an astonishing independence of the scientific method. He is a reckless logician and not a very clever sophist. He does not hesitate to employ, and he makes no effort to conceal, such broad and palpable fallacies as are usually considered appropriate only to the vulgar. His argument is disfigured with that most ready and rude of all devices, misrepresentation of his opponent. His sense of propriety is ever at the mercy of a tyrannous self-love. He attacks Mr. Spencer with a blithe unconsciousness of any inequality, and complains of the two or three mitigated blows which Mr. Spencer is stirred to give him, as if they were a real grievance. It is the half-earnest, half-playful encounter of a big, sedate Scotch collie with a pampered, saucy, lively little poodle. The lively little

poodle skips to and fro with the greatest agility — the agility of his motions being far more manifest than their sagacity. He barks sharply and industriously, and worries the big collie somewhat, but only worries him; never makes him deflect by one hair's breadth from his steadfast purpose; and when, after much teasing, the collie turns upon the poodle with only a suggestive shake, the surprised aggressor droops visibly, though the good-natured collie is too proud to keep hold, but summarily leaves his audacious antagonist with an impatient growl at his own folly in condescending for a moment to the unequal fight.

Nothing more clearly marks the unscholarly habit of Mr. Harrison than the sentence of whose bearings he is so unaware that he places it conspicuously, at the very opening of an essay: 'Ten years ago I warned Mr. Herbert Spencer that his Religion of the Unknowable was certain to lead him into strange company.' The self-betraying attitude needs no characterization to be amusing, but can he claim to be a scientist who sees any possible relation between the search for truth and the consequences of truth? We are not unfamiliar with this form of argument in the pulpit, and there we call it narrow, unscientific, bigoted. But it is no more unscientific in the pastor of the First Orthodox Church in Agawam than it is in the brilliant and able Positivist of Newton Hall. If it is priest-ridden to forbid an Andover student to prosecute research in a certain direction because it may land him in Unitarianism, what is it to 'warn' Herbert

Spencer against his line of study lest it lead him into Evangelical ranks? Between the fear of the orthodox that Mr. Spencer is ruling the Creator out of his Universe, and the fear of the Positivists that he is ruling him in, the unlucky philosopher must find that pure science is sore beset.

For this is really Mr. Harrison's quarrel with Mr. Spencer. He professes that it is exactly the opposite, but he proves that it is this. He is not intellectually honest either with himself or with his readers. He is not in search of truth; he is advocating a theory. He hath said in his heart, there is no God; and now he says in his head, there shall be no God. Reading Mr. Spencer with his elbows, as his manner is, he has evidently counted on him for a teacher of the Harrisonian righteousness; but advancing along the lines of his majestic thought, more and more clearly we discern the Absolute Being of pure science, the Almighty God of true theology. Frederic Harrison also sees and trembles. He assumes to be arguing against the All-Nothingness and consequent insufficiency of Mr. Spencer's Absolute Being; but really the fear of God is ever before his eyes. It is against the godhood of the Absolute Being that most of his argument is directed. It is not insufficiency but all-sufficiency that troubles him. In his opening paragraph he makes an almost hysterical attempt to widen the breach which he sees desperately closing between Spencer and Theology. He throws the careless reader off the scent by asserting that there is nothing to Mr. Spencer's God but negation, and then opens fight

upon him strenuously as the God of Theology! Of Mr Spencer's essay he says: 'It is the last word of the Agnostic Philosophy in its long controversy with Theology. That word is decisive, and it is hard to see how Theology can rally for another bout;' and having thus attempted to set a flagging Theology upon Mr. Spencer, he coolly turns upon Mr. Spencer and girds at him up hill and down dale, for being too theological! In one place he says, 'I insist that, to ordinary men and women, an unknowable and inconceivable Reality is practically an Unreality.' In another place he says, 'Practically, so far as it affects the lives of men and women in the battle of life, the Absolute and Unconditional Godhead of learned divines is very much the same thing as the Absolute Unknowable.' From which it follows that the God which learned divines have been preaching to ordinary men and women is a practical Unreality!

'I do not remember,' he says, 'that Mr. Spencer has ever formulated the Unknowable in terms with so deep a theological ring as we hear in the phrase "Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed."' Certainly, then, Mr. Spencer and the theologians should embrace, not fight.

'Mr. Spencer has discovered his Unknowable to be Ultimate Cause, the All-Being, the Creative Power, and all the other "alternative impossibilities of thought" which he once cast into the teeth of the older theologies. Naturally there is joy over one philosopher that repenteth.' But how can Theology be engaged at one and the same moment in recovering

from the knock-down which Mr. Spencer has given her and in rejoicing over him as a penitent? And if Mr. Spencer has come over to the older theologies, what have the older theologies to rally from?

Mr. Harrison boasts that still Mr. Spencer's Energy is not He, but It. Yet he objects to the Synopsis because the theses 'open like the book of Genesis. They sound to me like the first verse of the Pentateuch or the Fourth Gospel,' but the first verse of the Pentateuch and of the Fourth Gospel is, In the Beginning — God! Then the last word of the Agnostic Philosophy in its long contest with Theology is the same as the first word of Theology, and that word is not It, but He! In the long controversy Theology is victorious. In occasionally maintaining this assertion, Mr. Harrison is quite right, though not quite consistent. In fact, while Mr. Harrison is intermittently right, he never can be consistent.

On another page he affirms that 'Mr. Spencer's Energy remains always Energy, Force, nothing anthropomorphic; such as electricity; is certainly not God, has no analogy with God.' A few pages later, quoting and indorsing the religious newspapers, he maintains that this assertion of Energy is 'equivalent to the assertion that God is the mind and spirit of the Universe.' So it seems that Mr. Spencer's Energy is electricity when Theology is to be routed by Mr. Spencer, but God when Mr. Spencer is to be swallowed up of Theology.

Mr. Harrison belongs to the class that specially needs good memory. His own words prove that

when he was trying to rouse the *odium theologicum* against Mr. Spencer, he knew he was doing it on a false pretence. Tongues of men and angels will never secure any large following to the Great Being Humanity if the little beings of humanity disport themselves in this ungodly fashion. It is worse than the 'slip-slop of theologians' which, as Mr. Harrison naïvely remarks, 'Mr. Spencer, as much as any man living, has finally torn to shreds.' Just as much; for it would be difficult to find any man living who had ever seen any kind of *slop* torn to *shreds!*

Against Mr. Spencer's compact and unimpassioned logic Mr. Harrison's rickety rhetoric falls and fails so utterly as to deprive him of authority with every person who knows how to read. It has been said that Mr. Harrison's 'especial studies give authority to his utterances,' but no studies can give authority to one who contradicts himself and misrepresents his opponent at every turn. It is not what a man studies, but what he gets from his studies, that gives him authority. It is only in his representative capacity as the 'ablest English Positivist' that the conclusions of so inconsequent and untrustworthy a writer can repay scrutiny. A single paragraph — a fraction of a paragraph — presents a model to be scrupulously avoided by every conscientious student.

Mr. Spencer had given his solemn conclusion: 'Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he [man] is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.'

To which thus responds Mr. Harrison: —

'Fully accepting Mr. Spencer's logical canons, one does not see why it should be called an "absolute certainty." "Practical belief" satisfies me.' What then? Is Mr. Spencer writing to satisfy Mr. Harrison? Conceding Mr. Spencer's logical canons, it *is* an absolute certainty, which seems a tolerably good reason why it should be called so.

'"Infinite" and "Eternal," also, can mean to Mr. Spencer nothing more than "to which we know no limits, no beginning or end," and, for my part, I prefer to say this.' No one hinders, but Mr. Spencer says it better. Mr. Spencer is terse. Mr. Harrison is diffuse and tautological. 'Again, "an Energy"— why AN Energy. The Unknowable may certainly consist of more than one energy. To assert the presence of one uniform Energy is to profess to know something very important about the Unknowable.' But to assert that Energy is one is not more a profession of knowledge than to assert that it may be more than one. To assert that it is homogeneous is no more an assumption of knowledge than to assert that it may be heterogeneous.

'And then "from which all things proceed" is perhaps a rather equivocal reversion to the theologic type. . . . Let us keep the old words, for we all mean much the same thing; and I prefer to put it thus. All observation and meditation, science and philosophy, bring us "to the *practical belief* that man is ever in the presence of *some energy or energies* of which he knows nothing, and to which therefore he

would be wise to assign no limits, conditions or functions."' But Mr. Harrison's 'preference' involves him in self-contradiction. An 'energy of which he knows nothing' is an absurdity. To know that it is an energy is to know something, and to know something very important about it. Energy is power; power either in action or capable of action. Moreover, Mr. Harrison has already admitted that as a summary of philosophical conclusions, Mr. Spencer's statement seems to him 'frankly unanswerable.' In so doing he admits with Mr. Spencer that this Energy is everywhere present and is the source of all things, and this is to know more of it than of anything else in the heavens above or the earth beneath or the waters under the earth.

'This is doubtless what Mr. Spencer himself means.' As it is not in the least what Mr. Spencer says; as it is in fact the direct opposite of what he says, the direct denial of his most weighty assertion, this must be considered as an extraordinarily jaunty non-sequitur. But even then Mr. Harrison is not satisfied. Having stripped Mr. Spencer's conclusion of all its conclusiveness; having pecked and pulled and snipped and stitched until this insignificant remark, mingled of the camp-meeting exhortation, the lawyer's brief and the journeyman's blunder, is all that is left us of Mr. Spencer's stately and solemn utterance, he instantly and disdainfully tosses it aside.

'For my part, I prefer his old term, the Unknowable.' Frankly, then, why not say so at the beginning,

and spare us all this patchwork? Ah! because even on this he plants himself only while one should hold his breath, touching it only to spurn it like a toy balloon.

'Though I have always thought that it would be more philosophical not to assert of the unknown that it is the unknowable.' It certainly would. It is not philosophical at all to assert of the unknown that it is unknowable; moreover, it is not true. Mr. Spencer never does it. Unknowable has reference to human faculties, not simply to cosmic or other facts. But here soars the balloon again: —

'And, indeed, I would rather not use the capital letter, but stick literally to our evidence, and say frankly the unknown.' And having rebounded from the Unknowable to the Unknown, and from the Unknown to the unknown, thus putting the Infinite Energy in the same relation to us as the multiplication table to an infant, he makes the complacent reflection: '*Thus viewed*, the attempt, so to speak, to put a little unction into the Unknowable, is hardly worth the philosophical inaccuracy it involves.' Certainly the attempt to put any unction into Mr. Frederic Harrison's unknowable is worth nothing at all. He takes up the coronation robe of Mr. Spencer, pulls off the royal velvet and substitutes a piece of rusty alpaca, rips out the silken lining and replaces it with wool-batting, bastes over the ermine a fringe of frayed altar-lace, then shakes out the garment briskly, and, surveying it at arm's length, thoughtfully declares, 'Thus viewed, a coronation

robe is hardly worth the misfit it involves.' The robe which Mr. Harrison holds up to us is indeed the same old tatterdemalion tunic of Positivism that he has been puckering at these ten years, and the sooner he passes it out to the image-vender the better; but this is not at all the garment, fabric or fashion, which was wrought by the superbly constant skill of Mr. Herbert Spencer.

'So stated, the Positive Creed of Agnosticism still retains its negative character.' Without doubt, anything stated as the direct opposite of what it is, will ever retain the negative character of not being itself. Five times five stated as four times four, will always lie open to the suspicion of not being twenty-five.

This malign belittling seems to have fastened itself as a habit upon Mr. Harrison, and to pass current with him for both wit and logic. 'Mr. Spencer will not say that his Unknowable may not be conscious (as it might be a gooseberry).' This is not brilliant. It is not even smart. It is not a telling point. It is flippant, it is coarse, and it is nothing more.

Mr. Spencer affirms that man is constantly moved 'to imagine some solution of the Great Enigma, which he knows cannot be solved.' This, Mr. Harrison, as his manner is, vulgarizes into 'an ever-present conundrum to be everlastingly given up,' and defends himself for the Transformed Deformed by declaring that Mr. Spencer 'uses words almost exactly the same.' So Canon Farrar might have reported at Westminster that General Grant had passed in his checks; but it

would not have been witty, nor would it have made death ridiculous.

This study of a problem recognized as insoluble, Mr. Harrison finds an imbecile task, a low and idle part to play; yet he can carry Positivism no further than to an 'endless progress towards a perfection never perhaps to be reached, but to be ideally cherished in hope.' Why is it less imbecile to be forever travelling towards a point you may never reach than to be forever working at a problem you can never solve?

But Mr. Harrison has graver faults than these. He is so eager to destroy the God whom he sees gazing upon him out of Mr. Spencer's philosophy, that, not content with reading a wrong meaning into Mr. Spencer's words, he changes the words themselves. It is pretty bad when he speaks of 'Mr. Spencer's impersonal, unconscious, unthinking, and unthinkable Energy,' for Mr. Spencer distinctly disavows any such Energy; but it is very bad indeed when he violates the sanctity of quotation marks, and commits that unpardonable sin of discussion — misquotation. Charity might suggest that in describing the Energy as impersonal and unconscious, he was merely though severely suffering from imperfect apprehension; but when he puts the words in quotation marks and declares that Mr. Spencer so describes it, he must give chapter and verse in which Mr. Spencer so describes it, in which Mr. Spencer so contradicts his own otherwise uniform testimony, or theology will cease to have recourse to what he stig-

matizes as 'seeking a refuge in the unintelligible,' and will say simply that Mr. Harrison has borne false witness against his neighbor.

That it is a deliberate misrepresentation, and not a mere misunderstanding, is proved by the 'gooseberry' witticism. There the same man who declares that Mr. Spencer describes the Unknowable as unconscious, declares that Mr. Spencer will not say that the Unknowable may not be conscious. It is the Harrison kind of man, and not the Spencer kind of man, who describes a thing as being at the same time conscious and possibly unconscious.

In his extreme chagrin at finding that the Spencerian theory imposes upon the Universe a Creative Power, Mr. Harrison forgets not only his morals but his manners. He permits himself to point a sneer at Mr. Spencer's philosophy from personal acquaintance with Mr. Spencer and the knowledge thence derived of his private habits. Such a lapse is always to be regretted even in a crude social life, like that of our Republic. Yet when the sons of God present themselves for an electoral contest, Satan does appear also among them, and in the boom and crush of battle commits this abomination; but we are wholly unprepared to find it in the calm, highly-organized social life and the still more calm and more highly-organized philosophical life of the Old World. An Israelite who avails himself of such weapons is hardly to be distinguished from a Philistine.

Admitting — it is much to ask, but for the sake of the argument let us admit Mr. Harrison's peculiar

method of procedure; we find from it that Mr. Spencer's Energy is altogether insufficient as a basis of religion, as an object of worship. 'The points which the Unknowable has in common with the object of any religion are very slight and superficial.' 'Its sole dogma is the infinity of nothingness.' 'To make a religion out of the Unknowable is far more extravagant than to make it out of the Equator.' 'The universal presence of the Unknowable (or rather of the unknown)' [thus Mr. Harrison corrects himself, having no clearer notion of the difference between the two than if he were a member of an Evangelical Church, in good and regular standing] 'substratum is not a religion.' This, be it always remembered, is not Mr. Spencer's idea of the Eternal Energy. It is Mr. Harrison's rendering of Mr. Spencer's idea. He first plucks all the God-head out of it, and then complains that there is no god in it to worship. But we are going to admit that Mr. Spencer's Unknowable, though the God of theology by Mr. Harrison's admission, is, also by Mr. Harrison's assertion, a pure negation; in spite of the fact that he has always been worshipped, as impossible to worship as the Equator, — what has Mr. Harrison to offer instead for our worship?

'In any reasonable use of language,' he justly argues, 'religion implies some kind of belief in a Power outside ourselves, some kind of awe and gratitude felt for that Power, some kind of influence exerted by it over our lives. A religion which gives us nothing in particular to believe, nothing as an

object of awe and gratitude, which has no special relation to human duty, is not a religion at all. It may be a formula, a generalization, a logical postulate; but it is not a religion.' Mr. Spencer's idea is too vague and vast for the human heart. Mr. Harrison wants something that shall reverence the hallowed name of religion, which has meant man's deepest convictions, his surest hopes, the most sacred yearnings of his heart; which can bind in brotherhood generations of men, comfort the fatherless and the widow, uphold the martyr at the stake and the hero in his long battle. A mother wrung with agony for the loss of her child, or the wife crushed by the death of her children's father, or the helpless and the oppressed, the poor and the needy, men, women and children in sorrow, doubt, and want, longing for something to comfort them and to guide them, something to believe in, to hope for, to love, and to worship — they come to the philosopher and say, 'You men of science have silenced our old teachers. What religious faith do you give us in its place;' and the philosopher replies, 'Think on the Unknowable.' He considers that they might as well worship an algebraic formula and pray to (x^n)!

What has Mr. Harrison to pray to instead?

Well, he admits, he avows at the outset, that he prays to nothing. What he recommends to these suffering men and women, orphans, and widows, to comfort them in sorrow and to build them up in righteousness, is — the Religion of Humanity; and, that no injustice may be done, his exact words shall

be quoted, with absolute observance of quotation marks.

'A good man feels affection and reverence for his father and his mother; he can cultivate that feeling and make it the spring of conduct. . . . Something of the affection, and more of the sense of brotherhood, which a man feels towards his own parents, he feels towards his family; not a little of it even to his home, his city, or his province, and much of it towards his country. . . In that feeling there are elements of respect, elements of affection, and elements of devotion, in certain degrees. That sense of respect, affection, and devotion can be extended wider than country. It can be extended, I say, as far as the human race itself. . . . I maintain, our feeling for the human race must include what it has been as well as what it is to be. *This is all that* I mean by the religion of *humanity.*'

'The religion of Humanity, as I conceive it, is simply *morality fused with social devotion and enlightened by sound philosophy.*'

And again, for Mr. Harrison never seems quite satisfied with his own verbiage, let us do him the justice to admit, 'the religion of Humanity, as we understand it, is nothing but the idealized sum of those human feelings and duties which all decent men acknowledge in detail and in fact. All healthy morality, as well as all sound philosophy, shows us that the sum total of all this mass of life is good, and is tending towards better. . . . To soften and purify the masses of mankind we shall need all the passion and faith

which are truly dignified by the name of religion — religious respect, religious sense of duty, religious belief in something vastly nobler and stronger than self. They will find this in the mighty tale of human civilization. . . . It is a strength and comfort to all, whether weak, suffering, or bereaved, to feel that the whole sum of human effort in the past, as in the present, is steadily working, on the whole, to lessen the sum of misery, to help the fatherless and the widow, to assuage sickness, and to comfort the lonely. This is a real and solid encouragement, proved by all the facts of progressive civilization. . . . If it is not enough, it is at least all that men and women on earth have. Resignation and peace will be theirs when we have taught them habitually to know that it is all — when the promises of the churches are known to be false. . . . In plain words, the Religion of Humanity means recognizing your duty to your fellow man on human grounds.'

The defect in Mr. Harrison's religion is the same which he finds in Mr. Spencer's — it is not religion. In its aspect of patriotism we are quite ready to hurrah for it as 'The Old Flag,' but as religion it is hardly even an old rag.

It may be true, as Mr. Harrison affirms, that that which is a sound philosophical conclusion is not religion; but it does not follow that everything which is not a sound philosophical conclusion is religion. Mr. Harrison's most extraordinary position is that the Power which produces Humanity is a mere negation, with no working relation to Humanity; but

Humanity itself is Positive and the only Positive. As a philosophical conclusion from all we know by observation and meditation, Humanity was created by an external Energy; but as a practical religious fact Humanity created itself!

Mr. Harrison characterizes Mr. Spencer's theory as the Ghost of Religion; but Mr. Harrison's substitute is the Paper Doll of Religion. A ghost has at least the dignity of life. It inspires awe. It is mysterious, uncomprehended if not incomprehensible, but this paper puppet is precisely what Mr. Harrison's scissors make it; lies where it is laid, and never by any chance stands alone; has no more claim to adoration and no more chance for adoration than Bertha Blonde and Bessie Blue, flattened smooth at the bottom of their respective boxes beneath six layers of yellow gowns and red hats at one shilling the set.

Positivism never looked more poverty-stricken than thus arrayed by one of its own apostles if not one of its creators. No opponent could give it a sorrier setting forth. It is incredible that any man born of woman into a world that pays honest labor a dollar a day, should spend his time in declaring, not without rhetorical embellishment, that a mother holding her dying child in her arms is to be consoled by the mighty tale of civilization — that a wife losing in the husband of her youth all that made life dear will find strength in reflecting that the whole sum of human effort is on the whole steadily working to lessen human misery! To state it is enough. It defies refutation.

Mr. Harrison is so thoroughly Positive that he apparently considers his own statements sufficient. Positivism, *c'est moi*. 'The religion of man in the vast cycles of primitive ages was reverence for Nature as influencing Man. The religion of man in the vast cycles that are to come will be reverence for Humanity as supported by Nature. The religion of man in the twenty or thirty centuries of Theology was reverence for the assumed authors or controllers of Nature.' Mr. Harrison speaks as confidently of these vast cycles as if he had walked through them all with a microscope; but even taking him at his word, theology has the best showing. Better fifty years of the worship of the Author of both Nature and Man than cycles of the worship either of Nature or Man.

The final religion of primitive man and of enlightened man, he continues, 'rest on the same elements, — belief in the Power which controls his life, and grateful reverence for the Power so acknowledged.' This sounds sensible and orthodox. But — 'the primitive man thought that Power to be the object of Nature affecting Man. The cultured man knows that Power to be Humanity itself controlling and controlled by nature. The transitional and perpetually-changing creed of Theology has been an interlude.'

When the cultured man has cultured himself enough to understand the difference between knowing and believing, he will be perceptibly in advance of Mr. Frederic Harrison. He strains at Mr. Spen-

cer's certainty of Creative Energy, but he swallows without wincing the certainty that Humanity, from a religious point of sight, created itself. The religion of primitive man in the vast ante-historic cycles, of which we know little, and the religion of the cultured man in the vast future cycles, of which we know nothing, Mr. Harrison cites with equal confidence and respect; but the religion of the only twenty or thirty centuries that we do know something about is of small account, a mere 'transitional interlude,' and wholly wrong at that.

Mr. Harrison's protest against the Spencerian creed is, that 'to ordinary men and women, an unknowable and inconceivable Reality is practically an Unreality.' This I deny. I am ordinary men and women myself, thoroughly qualified to represent them by a profound, synthetic, and exhaustive ignorance of all science whatever, natural, metaphysical, theological; and they will surely say that to their ordinary comprehension an Infinite and Eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained, everywhere present, is an infinitely more natural and possible object of worship than an intangible something, which never had or professed to have any other existence than an idealized sum. It is easier even for the ordinary man and woman to adore the Unknowable than it is to adore the Know-that-it-isn't-able. What wonder that Mr. Harrison himself, after rivalling the play-mother's perseverance in the endeavor to make his poor little beggarly god presentable by a pat here, and a pull there, a foot

straightened out, and an arm pasted on, finally, with a misgiving of failure, and a presumable pang of disgust, gives it a petulant thrust, and says spitefully, as a fractious child may, if you don't like it you may lump it! 'If it is not enough, it is at least all that men and women on earth have.'

No, Mr. Harrison. This is not all.

Mr. Harrison reminds Mr. Spencer that in his religion of the Unknowable he stands almost alone. And Mr. Harrison does this confronting a great cloud of witnesses who testify through the thirty or forty centuries of theology, that is, during all the time that we know most about, that whatever may have been the human error clinging to human presentation, the God of everything which the world recognizes as theology has been an Unknowable God: Unknowable not in the sense that you cannot know anything about him, but in the sense that you cannot know everything about him; he cannot be comprehended within the circle of human knowledge. There is no other sense to the word Unknowable. Used as Mr. Harrison uses it, it is pure nonsense. If you cannot know anything about that which is unknowable, you cannot know that it exists; and it is just as absurd in a philosophical conclusion as it is in a religious creed. If you can know nothing about it, you cannot know that it is unknowable.

So far was this Unknowable from being a practical Unreality to men and women, ordinary and extraordinary, through the ages of theology, that the inconceivability of this Being was one of the avowed

reasons why men worshipped Him. They would not have reverenced Him if they had thought him such an one as themselves. They were not troubled with any misgivings as to His being a logical formula. They had a short way out of that perplexity. They put hands and feet to the abstraction, and brought it quickly into the realm of an illogical personality, it may be, but they at least kept quite clear of generalizing it into a universal postulate of philosophy; and a very inadequate presentation of the Absolute Being is better than an adequate and even eloquent presentation of nothing whatever, and is no whit more illogical. Mr. Harrison will not deny that this imperfectly presented Being has been the working God of theology through the twenty or thirty centuries over which he flits so blithely. It is by a Revelation from Newton Hall that we learn for the first time that Job and Isaiah and Paul were frittering away their adoration on a 'logician's artifice.' 'In homely words, such as the unlearned can understand, precisely what the religion of the Agnostic comes to,' — that is, what the religion of learned divines comes to — is the belief 'that there is a sort of a Something, about which we can know nothing.' That is as near as Mr. Harrison comes to interpreting the theology of forty centuries.

Mr. Harrison believes that he himself, on the contrary, stands 'alongside the religious spirits of every time and of every church in claiming for religion some intelligible object of reverence;' but he stands there only just long enough to present his claim.

The moment they see that he is pulling his trumpery god out of his own pocket, all times and all churches know that it is not an object of reverence as a god, and not intelligible as anything, and the thanes fly from him.

It is droll, and yet it is a little pathetic, and it is not a little irritating, to see how much trouble these ordinary men and women give Mr. Harrison. He is uneasy because Mr. Spencer's theory of the Absolute Being will not make good men and women out of common folk; but when Mr. Harrison reports Mr. Spencer as saying, 'We are not concerned to know what effect this religious sentiment will have as a moral agent,' the honest, ordinary man and woman has only to turn to Mr. Spencer's words to see that this is not a philosophical postulate nor a logical formula, but a falsehood. That may not be what Positive Philosophy calls it, or even what the Synthetic Theses name it; but if Mr. Harrison insists on 'homely words, such as the unlearned can understand,' that is exactly what it is. For Mr. Spencer says no such thing as Mr. Harrison assumes to quote. Positive Philosophy must have had an uncommonly hard struggle with Mr. Harrison, or it must have very little grip in itself. It has certainly not succeeded in making him truthful. It seems to have succeeded only in bringing him to a sufficient conscience of sin to be unwilling that Mr. Spencer's words and his own misquotations should be printed in the same volume for easy reference. Nor does it greatly improve the situation to observe that most of

his verbal offences are committed in the interest of the ordinary man and woman. Mr. Harrison worships Humanity quite too Positively when he makes a double-headed spook of that tolerably decent and intelligent, if vulgar couple, who have been worshipping the Unknowable all their lives without in the least suspecting that it was 'theologico-metaphysical jargon.'

Mr. Harrison makes merry over the Evolutionist's worship of the Unknowable as only appropriately or possibly represented by (x^n), to whom a weak brother is fancied as crying, 'O (x^n), love us, help us, make us one with thee!' But when Mr. Spencer shies a stone, exceedingly well aimed, at Mr. Harrison's glass house, the crash seriously disconcerts him. The worship of (x^n) was purely imaginary, the work of Mr. Harrison's exuberant fancy; but the Positivist's worship of Humanity has actually been regulated by ritual and practised by Comtists — was, indeed, apparently organized by Comte. Yet, as Mr. Harrison himself never marches around with banners in a procession or says prayers to Humanity, he thinks it hardly candid in Mr. Spencer to ridicule 'practices and opinions for which I have never made myself responsible.' What was it, then, in Mr. Harrison to ridicule opinions which Mr. Spencer never held, and practices which no one ever practised? Mr. Spencer ridiculed a form of Positive worship which actually existed, after Mr. Harrison had invented a worship of the Unknowable in order to ridicule it. 'My argument was entirely indepen-

dent of any religious ordinances whatever,' says Mr. Harrison. Not at all. It was not independent of the religious ordinances which he invented and which he put upon the lips of weak Agnostic brethren saying prayers to (x^n).

It is amusing to see the promptness with which Mr. Harrison draws off from any discussion of Comte with Mr. Spencer, and then discusses him, as Lord Dundreary's bird flocked, all by himself. His reason for declining such discussion he gives with a ready coarseness which bespeaks ample resources in that direction, — that Mr. Spencer knows nothing whatever of the writings of Comte! One may surely admire the courage which enabled Mr. Harrison to lift up his head, all battered with the merry broadside which Mr. Spencer had poured on him from Comte's own stores, and gasp out that Mr. Spencer knows nothing of Comte! Mr. Harrison's ideas of knowledge need clarifying. When he is pinned down subsequently by Mr. Spencer, he explains that by knowing nothing of Comte he means not knowing everything. His Positivism and his Agnosticism have evidently become thoroughly mixed, and he takes M. Comte for the Ultimate Reality of whom he has been talking in a similar strain.

His second reason for declining the discussion he more than intimates to be that Mr. Spencer could not understand Comte if he should try! 'To find many things which seem paradoxical is . . . easy enough; but to grasp the conceptions of Comte . . . seriously is labor of a different kind.' I should think

it must be. To take Comte seriously must require an altogether different kind of labor from any that Mr. Spencer has as yet accomplished. Mr. Harrison hints that if he were not merciful and compassionate he could show that Mr. Spencer is as irrational as Comte! Let it be observed, however, that he prudently refrains from carrying out his vague threat. 'I have too much respect for Mr. Spencer to quote any one of these bits of philosophic daring.' But he has not too much respect to insinuate, not only without the slightest basis, but with every indication to the contrary, that Mr. Spencer has his facts selected to suit his theories — 'clippings made to order.' In this he not only wrongs Mr. Spencer, but reveals himself. He avows Mr. Spencer to be 'the only living Englishman who can fairly lay claim to the name of philosopher — the only man in Europe now living who has constructed a real system of philosophy.' But does not Mr. Harrison know that a man who selects such facts only as suit his theory has no claim whatever to the name of philosopher, and that any system founded on only a part of the known facts has no claim to be considered philosophy? He confounds the philosopher with the advocate.

Immediately, with his familiar toy-balloon rebound from a statement as soon as he has touched it, Mr. Harrison adds that Mr. Spencer's facts 'make for my view as often as any other'! That is, Mr. Spencer, with the best will in the world to shut out everything which does not make for his own theories,

has not perception enough to see what is for and what is against his own theories; or, Mr. Harrison, having made his statement, instantly falls to and refutes it.

One could find it in his heart to be vexed with Mr. Spencer for undertaking seriously to deny and to disprove this charge. It is not argument, it is assassination; but it is abortive.

Mr. Harrison is as little disposed to enter the lists with Mr. Spencer in the matter of history as *in re* Comte — and inferentially for a similar reason, Mr. Spencer's ignorance! 'I am not at all disposed to enter into any historical argument with Mr. Spencer. . . . Mr. Spencer is seldom regarded as having much to tell us within the historical field.'

Compared with Mr. Harrison's easy flight across the countless centuries of the past and the future, Mr. Spencer must be admitted to be a slow coach. He does not begin history early enough to suit Mr. Harrison, and he falters long before he reaches that distant future held fast and firm with Mr. Harrison's glittering eye. Mr. Spencer feels his way back to a remote past when superhuman spirits were supposed to be within and behind Nature; but this is not half far enough for Mr. Harrison. 'This is obviously an oversight. We have to go very much further back for the genesis of religion. There were countless centuries of time, and there were, and there are, countless millions of men for whom no doctrine of superhuman spirits ever took coherent form. . . . The religion. . . was the belief and worship not of spirits of any kind, not of any immaterial, imagined

being *inside* things, but of the actual visible things themselves — trees, stones, rivers, mountains, earth, fire, stars, sun, and sky. Some of the most abiding and powerful of all religions have consisted in elaborate worship of these physical objects treated frankly as physical objects, without trace of ghost, spirit, or god.'

Yet Mr. Harrison, a page or two further on, declares that 'religion is not a thing of star-gazing and staring. . . . The mountain, sun, or sky which untutored man worships is thought to have some vital quality, some potency of the kind possessed by organic beings.'

So then it seems that physical objects were *not* treated frankly as physical objects; but that they had a very strong trace of spirit inside them, which is very nearly what Mr. Spencer says. Mr. Harrison will always know a great deal more history than Mr. Spencer, because he knows it all around and both sides alike. To be or not to be is the alternative with Mr. Spencer. To be *and* not to be is Mr. Harrison's quick solution of every problem. Mr. Spencer can only step cautiously from one stone of truth to another, as he finds them; and of course he goes not fast or far. Mr. Harrison pyrotechnics over stone, morass, hassock, swamp — stumble, tumble, crash, or splash, it is all one to him; he is in a state of preternatural activity all the time, and it never seems to occur to him that he is not getting ahead; he thinks on the contrary that this is the natural, calm gait of the true philosopher. Certainly, compar-

ing his effusive information, thus procured, about the vast cycles of primitive ages and the vast cycles that are to come, with whose religion he is perfectly conversant — and, by the way, it happens to be the Harrisonian — and the twenty or thirty paltry interluding, not to say interloping, centuries of theology, — Mr. Spencer has not much to tell us within his narrow historical field; but what little he has to say is historical.

Mr. Harrison protests that 'Mr. Spencer has given a quite exaggerated sense to what we mean by Religion and Humanity, by attaching to these ideas theological associations.' But Mr. Harrison himself dressed them up in theological associations. That is all there is of them. Mr. Harrison's religion has nothing religious about it except the terminology which he borrows wholesale from the old religions and theologies that he discards. 'In any reasonable use of language,' he says truly, 'religion implies some kind of belief in a Power outside ourselves;' and then he proceeds to construct this Power out of his father and mother, if they were decent people, and a great many others who were anything but decent people in many ways, and calls it Humanity, and proceeds to worship it. But in no reasonable use of language is Humanity a Power outside ourselves. Humanity is ourselves.

'There are always in some sort these three elements,' he says, 'in religion — belief, worship, conduct.' Now hard hit by Mr. Spencer's Comtean arrow, though hurled by an ignorant hand, he avows him-

self 'ready to give up the word "worship" if that is a stumbling-block,' by explaining that he has 'no wish to "worship" Humanity in any other sense than as a man may worship his own father and mother;' and that is no sense at all. What is all the trouble about? We love our fathers and mothers, but we know that we do not worship them. Still less do we worship other people's fathers and mothers, or all the fathers and mothers in the vast and countless cycles of the past. 'The roots and fibres of religion are to be found in love, awe, sympathy, gratitude, consciousness of inferiority and dependence, community of will, acceptance of control, manifestation of purpose, reverence for majesty, goodness, creative energy, life.' This is all borrowed from the religion of theology. These terms belong to God and to God alone. They belong to the Unknowable, known to hold in essence and puissance all that is and all that can be of goodness and of power, of beneficence and of logic. They are idle words applied to the human race. They are idle words, not to say servile words, as applied to our attitude towards any man or any number of men. Regarding whom have we consciousness of inferiority? President Cleveland? On whom have we consciousness of dependence? Queen Victoria? From whom do we accept control? Governor Robinson? Whose majesty do we reverence? Mr. Browning's? Or all the Brownings and Bismarcks and kings and kaisers of past and future, the political conventions of Saratoga, the theological council of Nice? But a mob is no more worshipful than one man. In

the United States we believe in the majority, but we do not worship it. We discipline it. No sooner is the majority seated in its proper place of power than we give ourselves no rest till we have pulled it down. In no reasonable use of language do we feel any religious awe or religious gratitude towards even the best men culled from the very best of the human race. We know them. We have gone in and out with them, living and dead. Their names are a household word. Their beloved faces are a household presence. Home is not home without them. And while love is a cold and weak word for the affection which they inspire, religion is no word at all.

Mr. Harrison has two ways of constructing a Religion of Humanity; one is to clothe Humanity with all the attributes of Deity; the other is to unclothe Religion of everything that makes it religious. But each is a matter of words. Not a fact is changed. Man does not become God and God does not become man.

We have too many instances of wrong-doing among the worshippers of the Unknowable, to lay to Mr. Harrison's defective theology his small respect for qualities which we have been accustomed to regard as of the highest value, indeed indispensable to scholars, gentlemen, not to say Christians — justice, truth, honest dealing. Every one, warm in defence of his own theory, is too apt to seize the first weapon that comes to hand; but Mr. Harrison's apparent indifference as to whether his weapon be

a major premise or meadow-mud, and the actual preponderance of meadow-mud in his argument, we may charitably attribute to the belittling influence of his puppet-god.

Mr. Spencer, in demonstrating the impossibility of feeling gratitude towards the 'Great Being Humanity,' because there is no such Being, presents his opponent as saying 'But surely "veneration and gratitude" are due somewhere. Surely civilized society, with its complex arrangements and involved processes . . . must be credited to some agency or other. If the "Great Being Humanity," considered as a whole, has not created it for us, . . . how happens it that such benefits have been achieved, and to what shall we attribute achievement of them?'

To which he makes answer, 'If "veneration and gratitude" are due at all, they are due to that Ultimate Cause from which Humanity, individually and as a whole, in common with all other things, has proceeded. . . . If we take the highest product of evolution, civilized society, and ask to what agency all its marvels must be credited, the inevitable answer is — to that Unknown Cause of which the entire Cosmos is a manifestation.'

And then follows a passage of singular beauty, dignity — and shall I not say piety? — in which he shows the unreasonableness of worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. I make no apology for quoting it entire, since no pages could be better occupied: —

'A spectator who, seeing a bubble floating on a

great river, had his attention so absorbed by the bubble that he ignored the river — nay, even ridiculed any one who thought that the river, out of which the bubble arose and into which it would presently lapse, deserved recognition — would fitly typify a disciple of M. Comte, who, centring all his higher sentiments on Humanity, holds it absurd to let either thought or feeling be occupied with that great stream of Creative Power, unlimited in Space or in Time, of which Humanity is the transitory product. Even if, instead of being the dull leaden-hued thing it is, the bubble Humanity had reached that stage of iridescence of which, happily, a high sample of man or woman sometimes shows us a beginning, it would still owe whatever there was in it of beauty to that Infinite and Eternal Energy out of which Humanity has quite recently emerged, and into which it must, in course of time, subside. And to suppose that this relatively-evanescent form of existence ought to occupy our minds so exclusively as to leave no space for a consciousness of that Ultimate Existence of which it is but one form out of multitudes — an Ultimate Existence which was manifested in infinitely-varied ways before Humanity arose, and will be manifested in infinitely-varied other ways when Humanity has ceased to be, seems very strange — to me, indeed, amazing.'

The only way in which Mr. Harrison can meet this august and solemn presentation of Creative Power is to call it 'a tirade against mankind and human nature,' 'a mere outburst of ill-humor,' ex-

hausting 'the terms of opprobrium for the collective notion of humanity.' 'These emiment men have no words strong enough (for controversial purposes) to express their contempt for the human race. "Mankind" says Mr. Spencer, "is a bubble," "a dull leaden-hued thing" . . . Why, this is the raving of Timon of Athens! . . . To my mind all this is sheer nonsense. . . . If Humanity be this mere bubble, the men and women that make it up must be equally worthy of our loathing and contempt.' For mankind outside 'their own belongings and circles, they assert supreme contempt and dislike.'

Certainly there is a part of mankind within Mr. Spencer's circle for whom he might feel a supreme contempt and loathing — contempt for a mind to which the loftiest unfolding of Infinite Power and Infinite Beneficence is sheer nonsense, loathing for a mind whose degrading misrepresentations are as continuous as they are revolting. For they may almost be said to make up the warp and woof of Mr. Harrison's argument. Summoned to adopt the Religion of Humanity, Mr. Spencer mildly protests that he cannot feel a reverence for politicians who seek success irrespective of principle; or adoration for the crowds who celebrate wholesale homicide in a war without cause. 'Not reverence,' he says, 'not admiration, not even respect, is caused by the sight of a hundred million Pagans masquerading as Christians.' And Mr. Harrison renders this into his mother-tongue thus: 'To Mr. Spencer, Europe *presents noth-*

ing but the revolting prospect of a hundred millions of Pagans masquerading as Christians!'

'I cannot worship the Sun as pure light,' might Mr. Spencer say, 'for I see several dark spots on it.'

'Oho!' would Mr. Harrison cry out. 'Here's a blind man indeed! Mr. Spencer cannot see any thing in the sky but a great black spot!'

Further than this — and if I seem to be pursuing the subject too minutely, let it be remembered that Mr. Frederic Harrison is the ablest English representative of Positivism, the strongest condemner and contemner of the 'slip-slop' of theology, a product of the highest literary culture and social order of the Old World; and that the highest literary tribunals of England have accepted his malformation of Mr. Spencer's philosophy as the real Spencerian philosophy! Further than this, therefore, let us patiently observe that, in spite of Mr. Harrison's own repeated declaration that religion requires some kind of awe and gratitude and veneration, in spite of the fact that in referring to this Mr. Spencer puts his reference in quotation marks, and in his reply dismisses the quotation marks, leaving them still and only around the quoted words, and says, 'If "veneration and gratitude" are due at all, they are due to that Ultimate Cause,' Mr. Harrison ignores the quotation marks, ignores the 'if,' and affirms categorically: 'Mr. Spencer admits that veneration and gratitude are demanded somewhere!' Nay, he even emphasizes the misstatement by the supererogative declaration, 'the words are not mine, but his.' And on this forged 'admission,' and

on his other equally baseless utterance that 'Mr. Spencer has nothing but contempt for the human race,' he sweeps together a page or two of sentences, chiefly false and wholly impertinent, into a demonstration of Mr. Spencer's 'singular slip in logic.' And when his attention is demanded to what is unhappily far from being his own singular or single slip in truthfulness, he says, 'I certainly did misunderstand Mr. Spencer, and that in all good faith.' If this is true, Mr. Harrison does not know how to read. The probability is that he has read so carelessly and thought so loosely and written so unconscientiously that he has really lost the power of seeing and saying things as they are. In this very paragraph, no sooner has Mr. Spencer, with an air of softly perplexed surprise, picked him up out of one quicksand, shaken him rough-dry, and set him on the bank in the sunshine, than he promptly pitches headlong into another: 'Be it so. But if Mr. Spencer's view of religion is that veneration and gratitude have no part in it —' There is no 'if' about it; Mr. Spencer said neither that veneration and gratitude were due nor were not due. He left that matter designedly and entirely undiscussed. What he said was, that, *if* they were due, they were due to the Creator, not to the created; to the Producer, not to the product.

To notice all Mr. Harrison's misrepresentations would be to rewrite his essays. Does Mr. Spencer say, 'Whatever components of the religious sentiment disappear, there must ever survive those which are appropriate to the consciousness of a Mystery

that cannot be fathomed and a Power that is omnipresent,' Mr. Harrison renders it into pigeon-English as, 'Mr. Spencer represents the business of Religion to be to keep alive the consciousness of a Mystery.' If Mr. Spencer should say, 'Bodily life cannot exist without the circulation of the blood,' Mr. Harrison would maintain that Mr. Spencer represents the business of life to be to keep the blood in circulation! Mr. Spencer says, 'I am not concerned to show what effect religious sentiment as hereafter thus modified will have as a moral agent;' and Mr. Harrison again breaks into the sacred precincts of quotation marks, and changes this into, 'We are not concerned to know what effect this religious sentiment will have as a moral agent.' If Mr. Spencer had said, 'It is not my business to show whether Positive Religion leads naturally to falsehood,' the true Harrisonian interpretation would be, 'Mr. Spencer says it is nobody's business whether a Positive Philosopher speaks truth or falsehood.'

This level of thought and this habit of speech are the signs of an untrained mind, whether that mind be editing a daily newspaper in New York City or writing Comtean essays in Westbourne-terrace.

And Mr. Harrison sits in the seat of the scornful, high above the 'slip-slop' which he attributes to theologians. It cannot be denied that theology was set for the fall and rise again of many in Israel; but never her votaries slipped in a more treacherous slop than that wherewithal Mr. Harrison overspreads his helpless pages. She would not have preserved her

centre of gravity through the thirty or forty centuries of interlude which Mr. Harrison kindly allows her, if Heaven had vouchsafed no firmer standing-ground than the Representative Positivist supplies to those who venture within the enchanted circle of his logic. Not without reason does Mr. Harrison resent the charge of changing front. To him who has no stable earth beneath his feet, and no arching heavens to win his seeking eyes; who looks for evidence only in the countless cycles of the unknown past, and for fruition only in the countless cycles of the unknown future, the establishment of anything so tangible as a front, the preservation of anything so palpable as a foothold, must seem but as the whimsical endeavor of one who beateth the air.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

Accompanying Mr. Spencer, we trace the slow, careful, difficult footsteps of Science. With him we go as far as human powers can go. He takes us to the outmost bounds of matter. Through the whole swing of the Universe, through all the flux and reflux of atoms, the ever-changing and ever-adjusting rhythm of worlds, we arrive with him at the conclusion that that which persists unchanging in quantity, but ever-changing in form, is Absolute Being — though it transcends human knowledge and conception; is Ultimate Reality, the necessary datum of every thought; is Self-Existence, a belief in which has among our beliefs the highest validity of any.

Thus Mr. Spencer gives us all the religion that can be given or gotten out of nature; and it is good. It is strong, solid, wholesome, far-reaching, all-comprehending. To have wrested this absolute certainty from the wide realm of mind and matter, to have thus acutely interpreted the manifold voices of nature, is a triumphant achievement of the human mind. But the Eternal quality of the human mind is in nothing more apparent than in its utter dissatisfaction with this

achievement. Its most marked result is to create an unquenchable thirst for more. Humanity refuses to be confined within its own narrow limits. Not only does the heart cry out for some strong, sure stay; but the mind in its highest development bounds upward, and will not be restrained. Mr. Spencer himself avows that the mystery of the old ignorance is as nothing to the mystery of the new knowledge. The bewilderment of the savage is surpassed by the bewilderment of the savant. What increase of knowledge has done for us is immeasurably to enlarge the sphere of our ignorance.

But the human intellect has touched its outmost verge in arriving at a consciousness of the Infinite Energy. If that Energy is to be further known to the human beings which it has produced, itself must make the overtures; for man cannot by the most rigorous searching find it out.

There is a group of traditions, gathered from points far apart in time and space of the world's experience, and cherished by a wide and deep conviction at the present moment, that these overtures have been made. Many of their traces and records are not here under discussion; but those which are of the highest repute and of the greatest acceptance to the Caucasian race to-day, have come down to us through Hebrew and Greek transmission, and are gathered into one book, which we call the Bible. The knowledge imparted by this book is called by those who accept it Revelation. These records have survived the roughest handling and the greater peril of kindness. They have

been cherished and guarded with a care and with a success unparalleled in the world's history. They have been attacked with a ferocious malignity. They have been defended with a lunacy of unreason. They have been translated, and interpreted, and perverted by generations of ignorance and of learning, of self-will and of benevolence, of devotion and of cruelty. Yet it is hardly too much to say that the gospel they bear ministers to the world all that it has of the larger hope and the clearer faith — the best of the life that now is, the most of the life that is to come.

Very little of the ground dug over by Science is touched in this Revelation. Yet at a few points of contact we discern a marked and significant correspondence.

Science, as presented by Mr. Spencer, agrees with the Bible: —

That all things proceed from an Infinite and Eternal Energy: In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.

That creation, whether or not by evolution, was successive, and not simultaneous: In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.

That man is the latest product of the process of creation: God created man and ended his work which he had made.

That the Infinite Energy is omnipresent, man being ever in its presence: Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence?

That the External, Infinite, Creative Energy and

the Internal, Finite, Created Energy are of the same substance: God made man in his own image.

That, while all creation is a manifestation of this Infinite Energy, into man, the last product of evolution — assuming creation to have been by evolution — was introduced a quality of the Infinite Energy, a consciousness which was not introduced into any previous product of evolution, and which differentiates him from every previous product; so that while, like clod and plant and beast, he is a part, though the concluding part, of evolution, and therefore kin to them, he has a certain other quality which is not in them, and which permanently and fundamentally separates his nature from theirs. Of no other creature than man can philosophy say, and no other creature than man can say, that the Power manifested throughout the Universe distinguished as material is the same Power which wells up in himself under the form of consciousness: And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

That this Energy is too great, vast, illimitable for man's intelligence to comprehend; is unknowable: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it.

Here Science stops; but man craves further advance. He has never been willing to accept any boundary line. The living soul has always aspired towards its Source, towards the Self-Existence whence it derived existence. This Bible tells us that the

Infinite Energy recognized and gratified this longing. The Infinite clothed itself in finiteness, lent itself to a human personality, brought itself purely and for ever down to the grasp of human comprehension; and this not as an afterthought, to repair the defects of an original, imperfect creation, but as a part of the original plan of creation for the perfecting of this final product of evolution — man; by his development out of the material world, in which he was created, into the spiritual world, for which he was created.

Does Mr. Spencer say that this is impossible? But Mr. Spencer says that 'beyond the phenomenal order of things our ideas of possible and impossible are irrelevant.' The Bible writers maintain the same position as valiantly as Mr. Spencer. 'With God all things are possible. The things which are impossible with man are possible with God.' With God, they declare, in full Spencerian measure, nothing shall be impossible. Matthew and Luke stand on each side of Herbert Spencer to stay his hands on the doctrine of the irrelevancy of our words possible and impossible as applied to the Infinite Energy.

But still more definitely Mr. Spencer hews out of the solid rock a solid basis for this Revelation. Mr. Spencer asserts as a result of reasoning that this Infinite and Eternal Energy, while unchanging in quantity, is ever changing in form, and is capable of assuming all forms. By his own logical canons, then, he is debarred from saying that it cannot take upon itself the form of man and become obedient

unto death, even the death of the cross. I do not know that he wishes to say it; but whether he wishes it or not, he cannot say it without disowning his own laws.

No one will deny that if the Infinite Energy did thus present itself, it supplied a sore and universal need of human nature, as well as one which Science is not able to meet. All history shows that man was made to adore. History and science alike show that he was made to adore something other and greater than himself, and that yet it must be a personality; for what is beyond personality cannot be brought within the limits of his conception. This instinct of adoration, of adequate expression, is as much a manifestation of the Eternal Energy as is a stone or a star, or Humanity itself. It was the Infinite Energy which made man too limited to embrace it in his scope, yet too large and like to be unconscious of its existence or satisfied without its constant communication.

It is unquestionable that certain minds of exceptional power are able to see the Invisible in the things that do appear, to adore the Eternal Power and Godhead from the creation of the world. In manly humility, in devoutness of ascription, in conscientious waiting upon the Eternal Creative Power, and patient search of his ways and works, neither the writers of the Old Testament nor the New exceeded their modern coadjutor, Mr. Herbert Spencer; and if it was the Holy Ghost which moved their utterance, full holy also is the Spirit which has touched his lips with sacred fire.

But just as unquestionably the mass of mankind is hardly able thus to approach God — to find him, to worship him. Two recourses man has: one is to invest God with the attributes of Humanity; the other is to invest Humanity with the attributes of God.

Mr. Frederic Harrison chooses the latter. He perceives the Infinite Energy, but he turns his back on it. He will have none of it. It may serve for a philosophical conclusion; but as religion, as an object of worship, he will none of it. He chooses rather to 'loaf and invite his soul.' He prefers to make up a religion of his own out of men and women; and a very poor religion it is — grotesque, arid, absurd.

Mankind in general has adopted the other recourse. It has promptly ignored the illimitability of God, and has simply and frankly limited Him — Jew and Gentile alike. The tendency to personify, to personalize, was so strong that in the rude and childish ages man was not content with words but made images of God, personified the Infinite in wood and stone. The early history of the Jewish people is the story of a steady fight against this tendency. The Hebrews had constantly to be dragged up from their knees before graven images of the Eternal Energy, and with sword and fire the truth had to be driven into their dull brains that the Eternal Energy was one God, was not to be represented even, by graven images.

As the character of a people became exalted and spiritualized, it rejected the lower representations and centralized on the higher. From graven images to

anthropomorphism was a great step forward in the evolution of religion. From representation to the eye by wood and metal to representation to the mind by terms of the human personality, was almost as far as man could go unassisted. Even Mr. Spencer admits, asserts, that the philosophers' obscurity comes largely from the fact that they are dealing with infinite things and have only finite words to express them. The External Energy can only be conceived in terms of the Internal Energy. With the same difficulty grappled the prophets of old; only the struggle was shorter. Where Mr. Spencer searches the hidden galleries of thought for the most abstract words, Abraham reasons with the Infinite Energy as if it were an Arab sheikh; where Mr. Spencer says, 'The process of integration combines with the process of differentiation to render this change not simply from homogeneity to heterogeneity, but from an indefinite homogeneity to a definite heterogeneity,' Moses says, triumphantly, The Lord is a man of war! To Mr. Spencer this must seem a very gross representation of the Ultimate Being; but his presentation would have seemed to the Hebrews as idle wind. Mr. Spencer would never have got them through the Red Sea if he had had nothing better to coax them along with than his homogeneities and his heterogeneities. But with it all Moses only did what philosophers are doing and must do. He expressed the External Energy in terms of the Internal Energy. When he stood scared and victorious on the shores of the sea which had swallowed up his fierce-pursuing foe, and

cried exultantly, Thy right hand hath dashed in pieces the enemy! that was his term of the Internal Energy — and not a bad term under the circumstances. It was not so near the kingdom of heaven as that other term, He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, the same shall find it; but the evolution of religion was in its earliest stages. Absolute Being is obliged to respect the limitations which itself has imposed. These limitations prevail not only in religion, but in science as rigidly. The growth of the idea of God in the human mind, and the growth of the idea of the Cosmos, and the growth of the Cosmos itself from the primal atom, have been by slow stages. It was no more grotesque or unreasonable for the sacred writers to ascribe hands and feet to the Self-Existence than it was for scientific writers to put this round world on the back of a tortoise. It was far less unscientific; for the language of the Bible is often palpably pictorial and poetic, and does not expect to be taken literally — while the tortoise philosophers seem actually to have thought they had made a point. The very terms of the story of the garden of Eden show that it was an allegory. The garden of God is an anthropomorphic figure, but its fruit was life and knowledge. I have seen God face to face, said Jacob at Peniel; and the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face in the tabernacle, as a man speaketh unto his friend. We have no right to misunderstand, for scarcely is the ink dry upon the confident pen before the Lord himself is made to say, There shall no man

see me and live. If the language of the Bible is to be interpreted as if it were the phraseology of a nineteenth century lawyer's brief, not only is Moses unable to stand the scrutiny of the philosophers, but he will be brought to grief by the Sunday-school scholars.

Mr. Spencer himself fully recognizes the gradual advance of human intelligence from and by anthropomorphic to spiritual conceptions of God; and it keeps step with the general moral advance of the human race, and not in the rear. Most persons would now be shocked by pictures of God the Father as an aged man with bald head and white abundant beard. Only the most uneducated find the bambino an aid to devotion; but there are very few even of the intellectual or the spiritual who perceive that omniscience is but pure logic, or that fatherhood and motherhood deeper than a function of nature, represent a quality of character.

But while idols were to be destroyed, and while man was mounting from the lower to the higher human qualities in descrying attributes of God, the need of personality to his conceptions remained inherent in his nature. What is then more reasonable than that the Absolute Being should manifest himself in a personality? This would be an achievement which would remove all difficulties. The sum of human effort is scarcely more than a minus quantity. The Infinite Energy of Mr. Spencer is immanent, but incomprehensible, beyond the touch of man for solace or sympathy. The Indefinite Inexistibility of Mr. Harrison's and M. Comte's manufacture has

no shadow or symbol nor certitude nor peace nor help for pain. Beyond the realm of personality the great masses cannot go. But if the Infinite did communicate itself through the finite, if, by a way which we know not, the Impersonal became personal, the language of personality becomes instantly appropriate. That Jesus which is called the Christ, which called himself the Son of God, did, we are told, so ally himself to us on the human side, while being himself so allied with the Absolute Being on the eternal side, that through him and in him we are forever put into communication with the Absolute Being, the Invisible God. While yet with the Philosophers, with Moses, with the Evangelists, no man can see God at any time; with this Evangel and in it, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father hath declared him, so that man can not only look upon God in Christ, but because he can look upon God he shall live forever. In him is life. Because I live, ye shall live also. How this alliance was compassed we do not know. Dimly to the human mind, in many ages and nations, the fact of such an alliance, its possibility and its desirability, seem to have been foreshadowed; and the earnest expectation of the creature waited for this manifestation of the Creator. But no Revelation has concerned itself to inform us by what unknown though not unnatural laws God was able to manifest himself in and through a human nature. There is but the simple assertion that God was manifest in the flesh. The Revealer appears to

think that a solution of the mystery is not of the slightest consequence. He lays down the law which Mr. Spencer has lately re-enacted, that with God all things are possible. He affirms that in this Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that is, all of the Godhead that could dwell in human body. He assures the questioner that what thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter — and that is all. To the Infinite Energy it is no mystery, but a part of the natural order of the Universe. To us it seems a mystery because the law under which it comes lies outside the sphere of our common observation. But a mystery seen but once is no more mysterious than a mystery seen many times. A mystery is not less a mystery by being repeated. We see a constantly recurring mystery, and we call it the order of nature; and rest on our oars as if that explained it, whereas it explains nothing. But this alliance of the Divine with the human is no more mysterious than the emanation of the human from the Divine. Christ is but one and men are myriads; but of all the myriads, not one has ever known how it was or when it was that the inspiration of the Almighty gave him understanding.

If it is true, the want of Humanity is supplied. If the Inscrutable has put himself within the limits of our scrutiny, if Jesus was indeed the Christ, God manifest within the circle of our love and fear and hope and help, why then we have everything which Philosophy misses, everything that Positivism was invented for, everything which the human heart has

craved. We have no need of Comte; for a greater than Comte is here, and in Comte's own line. Comte is commended because he would lift the lowly, and correct the besetting sin of the philosopher and the man of power. But the Infinite Energy became Emanuel, God with us, God with the lowly, to do that very thing for the whole world, to seek and to save that which was lost. To suffering souls the Positivist says, Read the mighty tale of human civilization; but St. Paul cries out, with a theological ring to be sure, but the ring of confidence and exultation: These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. That is consolation. We can bear everything for a moment. My grace is sufficient for thee! Whose grace? The grace of the Eternal Energy, by whom we are created and sustained, and who knows what is sufficient. To the poor and the needy the compassionate Positivist says pitifully: The whole sum of human effort is steadily working, on the whole, to lessen the sum of human misery. But to them Jesus, which is called the Christ, Emanuel, God with us, stretches out arms of love and calls, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. Unto you, not unto some future, unknown generation. To him who suffers, peace; to the heavy-laden, rest: not to some later being who will not suffer or be heavy-laden. 'But

this is egoism,' says the altruist. Yes, and it has the great merit of not falsely pretending to suppress egoism. But it is an egoism and the only egoism which goes hand in hand with the loftiest altruism; for it is an egoism which continually admonishes to purify and perfect one's self for and by the service of Humanity and for and by alliance with its Source; and it is an egoism to which is presented for its eternal model the highest form of human life, the embodiment of the Infinite in the finite, the perfect and final example of utter self-sacrifice, the All-Powerful subjecting himself to weakness, the All-Pure consorting with wickedness, the Creator mingling with the creature, that so he might be lifted into the possibility of Eternal Divine companionship. Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the goodness of God!

Mr. Spencer tries, but vainly, to adhere to impersonality. Mr. Harrison, vowed to personality, restricts religion to Humanity. Revelation leaves to God his impersonality of the heavens, but for this world shows him manifest in Christ. The immanent Energy of Mr. Spencer is transfigured by the light of Revelation into the immanent Christ, pathetically believed in by the early Christians, too far forgotten by the succeeding ages, but now returning to us once more through the ministrations of later apostles, and in the fulness of time,—the tender human elder brother who forever banishes loneliness with his 'Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!'

There are Positivists who, unwilling to relinquish wholly the Infinite Creative Energy, yet positive to accept only what they see, are faltering into the suggestion that Humanity may be regarded as 'a Mediator between men and the Unknowable.' But this also is vanity. There is no Humanity apart from man. How can man be a mediator to himself? But Paul, taught by an inward way, understands the situation instantly and meets it reasonably: There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of God.

'But it is untrue,' implies Mr. Harrison. 'The promises of the churches are known to be false,' would Mr. Harrison teach. Softly there, Mr. Harrison. On a question of truth or falsehood the 'brilliant' Positivist is not authority. In this discussion we have seen that he abounds in misrepresentation, that he does not hesitate at false statement — or if he hesitates, he is lost. If he cannot be trusted at arm's length, can he be trusted at Heaven's length? If he is false regarding his brother, whom he hath seen, will he be true regarding the Christ, whom he will not see?

Without touching the question of historical evidence, which is alien to this discussion, but which has nothing to lose by discussion, we have seen that the necessity of Revelation to any further knowledge of the Infinite Energy is demonstrated by Mr. Spencer's logic and by Mr. Harrison's religious gymnastics. Mr. Spencer proves it by arguing that it is impossible for man to construct a personal religion; Mr. Harri-

son, by constructing one himself! But it is not unreasonable, it is not a violation of the natural, to think that this Infinite Energy, which so lavished itself in making the world ready for man, and in making man ready for the world, lavished itself with equal generosity in moulding the religious idea in man to higher and higher forms, until man was ready to receive the Christ, who concentrated in himself all personality and became forever the pure and sufficient object at once of human adoration and example — God manifest and so meet for worship, man and so meet for a model. Then was mankind ready to cast off anthropomorphism, and learn that God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Those who say that it is impossible, that it is unreasonable, are the narrow minds, the unphilosophical, who are undertaking to measure the infinite by their own little yardsticks. I will not say is it impossible, but is it even unreasonable to believe that he or it — call it by whatever name — who is not too vast and far to make man, is not too vast and far to sustain and strengthen him at the point where he most needs sustenance and strength? If it is not too minute for the Infinite Energy to see that every sparrow is provided with light, hollow bones which he can bear through the air, is it weak and silly to suppose that not one of these shall fall to the ground without its Maker's notice? It seems impossible that any Being could have produced the illimitable Universes; but the Universes are. Every law by

which man makes every machine, from a pin to a steam-engine, is a law on which the stars are hung. Is it close logic to say that a small, and feeble, and clumsy machine must be made by mind, but a vast, complex, and mighty machine could be made by nobody — just oozed out of itself? This is a very awkward way for a journeyman mechanic to get rid of a master mechanic. A watch that tells time haltingly, that must be wound up every day, that is worn out in a few years — must that be projected by mind, while the eternal pendulum of the sun swings out from senseless dust? A futile rose, laid in coarse colors, on coarse canvas, without fragrance, without life — must it be an artist's work? But the living rose, of an exquisite delicacy, of a matchless aroma, of a soft and glowing hue beyond the painter's art — behind that can be no Creator, only blind force? No; the miracle is here. We may refuse to accept, we may not be able to find any explanation of it, but we cannot explain it away. Revelation creates nothing. It only shows the Author of what is already created; and it shows, it defines, it describes the same Author which Science has already found.

Revelation claims nothing more wonderful than is classified by the man of science, than is seen by the man of ignorance. Turning water into wine, restoring the soul to its abandoned clay, are but childish and meretricious devices compared with the ever-recurring, and therefore unrecognized miracles of life. The family, the calyx and corolla of the human soul,

is a more miraculous triumph of invention than all the comparative sleight-of-hand of loaves and fishes, if they were wrought once to arrest the attention of a rude and ignorant populace. Founded on the strongest, widest, noblest of human passions; beset by deadly peril, yet diffusing an exquisite happiness; susceptible of the lowest debasement, but adapted to the most exalted culture; demanding constant self-sacrifice, yet demanding it so deftly that its offering seems the eager tribute of love, — the family institution exhausts marvel as a device for compassing at once the perpetuation, the happiness, and the elevation of the human race. It is inscrutable, it is to appearance in some aspects of a fiendish cruelty, it is only partially successful; if we could view it theoretically, without any light from experience, we should say that it could not be successful at all, that it would be a total failure; but what there is of best on earth is gathered in its bosom, and what there is of hope in Heaven finds there its type and foretaste.

And here, here, what Mr. Spencer sees through a glass darkly, appears face to face. He, indeed, avoids declaring himself on the beneficence of the Energy, but he lays down a principle which involves it. He teaches that the Infinite Energy contains in puissance whatever is and is to be manifested in the Universe of mind and matter and heart and soul. He admits also that the human race is ever rising. He will not deny that the ultimate, the prevailing, the one absolutely irresistible force in the world is love. Is it not then simply natural, philosophical, that God is

love? This, Revelation proclaims. This, Philosophy implies. Why, then, is it not reasonable to suppose that God so loved the world that he became manifest in the flesh to give to the world what it lacked? Infinite Energy is also, must be, Infinite Love. That Infinite Love should come to earth is no more improbable than that Infinite Energy should have made the earth. That the Holy Spirit of Consolation should brood over all troubled hearts, is but a natural, a due part of the plan under which hearts are made — susceptible of suffering, thirsty for happiness, weak to avoid the one or to compass the other. If one had come saying only: 'There is for your comfort a practical belief in something of which you know nothing;' 'The tale of civilization is mighty, and there is nothing greater than yourselves' — why, the Jews would have sent him about his business none too quickly; but Jesus came pointing out to a world needing to adore, the mighty God as a God of love, for adoration; holding up to a world which could think and feel only in terms of personality, a personality perfect, yet possible of imitation; to the hearts which he had made loving home and happiness, eternal happiness and a heavenly home; stimulating always to duty, purity, and unselfishness, by appeals to every passion, every fear, every hope, which the Infinite Energy had implanted in the man which he had made.

If the system of Christianity be a device of man, we might well turn Positivists and worship that man.

Why the Infinite Energy should manifest itself by

stages, we do not know. It is as if, alike in evolving the religious idea in the human race and in evolving the human race itself — if indeed the perfect evolution of the religious idea be not the completion of the evolution of the race — as if the Creative Power were forced to hurry slowly, to advance step by step from lower to higher. It certainly cannot be, as it might appear, that the Creator is only learning the trade of creation, gradually perfecting himself through the lower for the higher organisms. No philosophy or anthropomorphism has ever suggested that. If creation has indeed been by evolution; whether it were a subjective evolution, the development of one species into another, or whether it were an objective evolution, the creation of one species after another; whether, that is, evolution were in the organic law of the created, or whether it were solely in the idea of the Creator, — in either case we equally and clearly see that it must have been chosen because it was, on the whole, the best way; certainly it is a most orderly way. Why theology should quarrel with it, no man knows. To descend from a beast cannot be undignified to him whom theology has always taught that he descended from a clod. A beast is a good deal higher up in the scale than a handful of dust. It is only that theology takes one leap from mud to mind, while science shows the gradual stages by which life mounted from mud to mind. Both begin and end at the same place.

Science in its theory of evolution gives to the Rest-day of the Creator, the Sabbath of the world,

its vast and sublime significance. The Jews held it to betoken their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and every nation may secure it at will for whatever symbolism it wishes; but science lifts it above all local and temporary incident into an atmosphere as broad as the earth, as old as the centuries, for it represents the completed work of evolution. God prepared the earth for man through every stage of heat and cooling from the first impalpability to the last and highest animal organization, which received the Living Soul, and then God rested from all his work which he had created and made, and gave over the earth to the hands of man. Evolution is not henceforth to create new species, higher organisms. Evolution is henceforth in the hands of man, to work on what species he will, to destroy one, to develop another, according to his own needs and conveniences, to conquer the earth and subdue it, to discover and utilize its hidden forces. Evolution henceforth is of man himself from his lower to his higher nature. It is to make the brute in himself secondary, the divine in himself primary. It is to keep the body under, the soul uppermost. God rests from his work of creation, but not from his work of salvation. For while man inherits the earth by divine bequest, and is hotly engaged in his work of subduing it, he may work out also and thereby his own salvation with infinite faith and hope, because it is God that worketh in him, drawing him ever upward.

Wherever evolution comes within our own scope, we do not quarrel with it. First the blade, then the

ear, then the full corn in the ear, is the law of evolution in the corn-field, and we do not call it weakness but wonder. First utter helplessness, then essaying feet, before the strong, sure step; but who could spare the sweetness of the essaying feet? How can that be a defect in large which is a charm in small? The evolution of wisdom and virtue and strength from ignorance, innocence, and weakness is the evolution of love, patience, unselfishness, the most divine of human qualities, in those who minister to weakness. Through mistake and wilful wandering and feeble effort, through strife and blood and tears, the idea of God has evolved from man's first vague consciousness to this day, when we are at least dimly seeing that the long lane must have a turning, that the living soul is a different kind of product from that dust of the earth which has not received the divine in-breathing, that spiritual law reverses physical law; that the lowly shall be exalted, that the strong must serve the weak, that self-surrender is the highest form of self-control, that human society should model itself on the human family, that the human family is the type of the social order of the spiritual world. For the Creative Power which reveals itself to Mr. Spencer as Infinite Energy revealed itself through Jesus Christ as our Father, which art in Heaven.

This, then, is what Revelation has done for us, — what we could not do for ourselves, what few could do in small degree, what most of us could not do at all. It has declared to us the Unknown

God. Science rears his altar, and with the reverence born of wisdom inscribes thereon the Unknowable name. Revelation declares his character, his designs, his fatherhood. Science speaks to the few, fitted by long watching and patient waiting to receive the wondrous word. Revelation speaks to all —lowly, ignorant, toiling, suffering, the weary and the heavy-laden; speaks not of things hard to be understood, but of consolation, and hope, and stimulus, simple assurances that all need and all understand. Spiritual life and immortality are faintly hinted in the rocks, are foreshadowed in all organic life, are urgently demanded by the living soul, but are brought to light only through the Gospel. Revelation does not seek to exclude or to estop Science. It formulates no detailed system of the Universe. Only here and there, subservient to more pressing aims, a few large, majestic lines mark the trend of creation. A few firm guide-posts here and there may help the footsteps of ignorance, and confirm his right of way to the man of science as well. The sum of mystery is not lessened by Revelation any more than by Science. Lo these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him! When, either through Revelation or through Science, or through the two combined, one gets a glimpse of some new part of His ways, the sudden illumination floods the vision with so divine a radiance, that, dazzled and glorified, one fancies for a moment that he has seen the innermost Heavens, and he walks in glory and in joy. Though he be only following his plough along the mountain-

side, it becomes to him a true Mount of Transfiguration. But when his eyes are wonted to the new light, he sees that it shines only in a little circle around his own feet, a wider circle than before, a brighter light than of old, a true gleam, he believes, from the Infinite Heavens of the Unseen Universe, but leaving around him still an ever-widening realm of darkness, soft indeed and brooding not threatening, but impenetrable.

Neither evolution nor Revelation explains the Universe, but evolution explains Revelation. Theology does not explain Revelation. Theology confuses Revelation. Evolution follows reason. Theology baffles, evades, if it does not defy reason. Theology makes creation a fatal mistake, Christ an imperfect reparation. And in saying this let me not be thought so foolish as to bring a railing accusation against theology, that noblest of sciences, one of the strongest powers of the world, whose savants have been mighty men of valor, whose gravest mistakes have been from too close pursuit of the reason's rigid command, whose hidden springs of religion have made a thousand wildernesses blossom as the rose. The evils wrought by theology have not been by want of thought or by want of heart. They are the mistakes, the errors, of the greatest minds grappling with the greatest themes, sensitive to the gravest responsibilities. They exist because of human limitations, because it seemed good to God that we should be here as in a darkening plain swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night.

It would perhaps be truer to say the theology of evolution is a more reasonable thing than any previous theology. It is more strictly in accord with the theology of Revelation than is the theology of the old divines; and this is natural, for the theology of evolution and the theology of Revelation are but one remove from God. The one is a direct study of God in his Universe, the other is a direct study of God in Christ. The theology of the church is two removes from God; is founded on a study of the human medium through which Christ communicated himself to the world. In the first theologies, therefore, the liability to error is reduced to its lowest terms. In the last, the theology of the church, there is an added element of error, an added possibility of defect. The theology of evolution is its strongest feature, its final outcome. Evolution makes a place for the Christ, and Revelation puts him in it. The Christ of theology only succeeds in wresting a minute part of the world from the cruel failure and ruin of creation. The Christ, on the theory of evolution, is the last lavish outpouring of Infinite Love to perfect the Humanity on which Infinite Love had lavished uncounted ages of preparation. First, the hidden birth of matter; then its constant development into finer and finer organisms, till it was fitted to become the temple of the Holy Ghost; then the mystic and holy in-breathing by which the matter, the dust, the beast, the man, became a living soul: slow leading of this primitive but living soul — faint but vital spark of heavenly flame — along

and always upwards towards its source of life, till — not when God had discovered how defective was his work and vainly tried to mend it, but, knowing that it was good — when the fulness of time was come to which the whole work of creation had tended, when the fulness of time was come in which Humanity was wrought flexible and fine enough to receive him, God sent forth his Son into the world. Even then too early he came, it would appear; for the world hardly received him. God seems always, in spite of the patient ages, a little in a hurry. The Infinite Energy always overflows. Life came before the earth was ready for it. Eternal Life came before the spiritual world could appreciate it. Apparently, life is so precious a boon that God could not wait to confer it. Certain it is that Creative Energy cares not to make life easy, only to make it possible. Just as soon as our globe was capable of sustaining organic life even by hard fighting, organic life was here. Man came as soon as the earth was ready for him — not ready to support him in ease, but so far ready as that a certain support could be wrested from her soil by the utmost exertion of his strength, his ingenuity, his perseverance. Life becomes easy only as man makes it easy for himself. Iron and water have been here ever since man has been here. Electricity has ever thrilled all vital space. The air has been listening to pulsate at the word of command, awaiting the centuries of man's development to become the messenger of his will. Therefore it must be that blessing is in the struggle before the victory. The ground

was indeed accursed for man's sake, for man's benefit. He eats his bread in the sweat of his face, because sweat is better than slumber for his growth in all grace physical, mental, spiritual.

Thus, also, it might seem, came Christ into the world prematurely. He was unappreciated; nay more, he was despised, and more than that, rejected; but not wholly. He came unto his own and his own received him not. But they were his own; not created for evil, not foredoomed to eternal ruin, but his own; weak, foolish, fierce, false, but still his own; the mark of the beast not wholly erased from human brows, but always growing fainter for the new name that was to be written there. His own received him not; but as many as received him, received with him power to retain him always, even unto the end of the world.

So he was not premature; for, though he was reviled and crucified, he was never lost out of his world. The seed lodged — a tiny seed in a wide, wild world. Sun parched it, stones crushed it, cold chilled it; shallow soil, fierce storms, all harsh conditions, beset it; but it took root, it pierced downward, it sprang upward. Its bloom and fruitage overspread the whole earth. The life of the soul, Eternal Life, has had as sharp a struggle as physical life, the life of earth; but both have prevailed. Infinite Energy, Infinite Love alike made no mistake. Neither life came till the fulness of time was come. Both came in harmony with the grand and perfect order of evolution.

To the strength of the Infinite Energy, to the warmth of the Infinite Love, Humanity, frail and fearful, may confidently trust itself, in the full assurance, given not more to babes and sucklings by the Revelation of the Word than to developed intelligences through the Revelation of Science, and to longing hearts through the Revelation of Aspiration: the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord!

CASUS BELLI

An explanation of the somewhat extraordinarily composite character of this book may, perhaps, relieve it from the charge of assumption and presumption which might be preferred against it.

During the publication of the Spencer and Harrison essays in the *Nineteenth Century*, a large and apparently respectable element in literary England began to discuss them on a basis which showed that Mr. Spencer was taken on Mr Harrison's word. It is difficult to imagine anything more discreditable to English scholarship. Mr. Wilfrid Ward, for instance, in the *National Review*, writes a long, elaborate, and interesting paper on the two essayists, and throughout the whole he accepts Mr. Harrison's renderings of Mr. Spencer's opinions, and criticises and condemns them as Mr. Spencer's. The very paragraph which I have quoted as everything that a paragraph should not be, Mr. Wilfrid Ward quotes as 'quite unanswerable common sense.' After all Mr. Spencer's protests and refusals even to discuss the question whether and to whom awe, reverence, and veneration are due, Mr. Wilfrid Ward,

exactly as if Mr. Spencer had not spoken, calmly affirms that Mr. Spencer teaches that 'the Unknowable Energy is the true object of the sentiments of awe and worship,' and pursues a long argument exactly as if Mr. Spencer had affirmed what he resolutely and repeatedly refused to affirm. He quotes the statements that 'Nothing can be known,' and 'a sort of a something exists beyond our knowledge,' as if Mr. Spencer had made them and proceeded to found a religion on them, and gives no hint that Mr. Harrison made them, and that Mr. Spencer said precisely the contrary. He gathers in a group some of the wildest perpetrations of Mr. Harrison's wind-swept logic, and declares that 'Mr. Harrison seems to me, in this portion of his criticism, to reason with an accuracy and sobriety which are quite beyond praise.' 'So far he figures as before all things a sober and cautious thinker.' Utterly deaf and dead to the fact which glares through this volume — that Mr. Spencer and Mr. Harrison are wider than the poles asunder, he testifies that they have 'relentlessly pursued the path of negation, until they have arrived at the common conclusion that all that is known is phenomenal Nature in its operation on mankind.' In vain for Mr. Ward are Mr. Spencer's repeated protestations that the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute Existence, Self-Life lies behind phenomenal Nature.

Mr. Frederic Harrison bends over Mr. Spencer's Philosophy, vigorously and violently kneading it into Absolute Negation; Mr. Herbert Spencer lays about him lustily in its rescue and defence as Absolute

Reality; and Mr. Wilfrid Ward, calmly surveying the battle, pronounces it to be Absolute Agreement.

'The sky is blue, and beyond that is the outer Universe, which I do not now discuss,' says Mr. Spencer.

'Mr. Spencer maintains that the sky is bluish, and that there the Universe comes to an end,' says Mr. Harrison.

'Mr. Spencer and Mr. Harrison are agreed,' says Mr. Ward, 'to blot out all color from the Universe.'

It is true that when Mr. Harrison begins to expound his own religion, Mr. Ward discovers 'a marvellous collapse of the critical and cautious spirit by which the earlier portion of Mr. Harrison's paper was distinguished.' 'Consistency and sobriety of reason vanish.' They could not vanish, because they were never there. But so long as that peculiar pawing and clawing which serve Mr. Harrison for argument were exerted on Mr. Ward's side, Mr. Harrison was a sober and accurate reasoner. When they made against Mr. Ward's theories, Mr. Harrison became instantly a lunatic.

And *The Spectator* follows *The National Review* and pats Mr. Wilfrid Ward on the head for his 'brilliant paper,' and talks of Mr. Harrison's 'exposure of Mr. Spencer,' and admires the adroitness with which Mr. Ward 'turns the tables on Mr. Frederic Harrison after the same fashion in which Mr. Frederic Harrison had turned them on Mr. Herbert Spencer.' The only fashion in which Mr. Harrison turned the tables on Mr. Spencer was to precipitate himself flat on the floor under a crash of tables with their legs in the air!

And even the Honorable Mr. Justice Stephen argues against Mr. Spencer and Mr. Harrison as if they were on the same footing, conferring indeed the dignity of a more elaborate refutation upon Mr. Harrison's dolls than upon Mr. Spencer's abstractions.

All this unscholarly misrepresentation Mr. Spencer endures with a calmness which is impossible to ordinary mortals. To some it is exasperating. It does not belong to the class of crimes against property, but against life, against human rights. It is of the nature of murder and a rather aggravated kind of murder; and it raises in the unphilosophical and imperfectly Christianized mind a thirst for blood. When Englishmen, with all the prestige of their thousand-year-old Universities, and all the vantage-ground of their leisure classes and their long-established social order, rise up before the world and with minute demonstration show that they do not know how to read, nothing seems to the American savage so proper, so desirable, so imperative, as to rise up and slay them. For a while at least, swing low, sweet chariot of English culture! The primary schools which in the United States pass for colleges cannot turn out a better article of imperfect apprehension, of clumsy statement, of crude reasoning, of judicial blindness, than the Mutual Admiration Societies of England are billing and cooing over in each others' ranks.

The sole plea that can be offered in mitigation of damages is that these essays appeared from time to time in a periodical, and not at any time together, so that they could be comprehensively surveyed. A

careless reader, who should not have Mr. Spencer's essays at hand, might accept Mr. Harrison's version without delaying judgment for the search of last month's magazines. This is a feeble plea; a careless reader has no moral right to be a writer. But unquestionably the American reader has an advantage in seeing all the essays spread out before him in the American book. He has only to turn a leaf to find that Mr. Harrison has turned a somersault.

Until the simultaneous appearance of the essays, doubtless many American citizens were as ignorant of Mr. Spencer as are Mr. Harrison and Mr. Ward, though Heaven's grace was vouchsafed them not to undertake to criticise, much less to expound him. They had, without having read Mr. Spencer, taken him at his general ecclesiastical valuation, and Mr. Harrison as a member of the same group. The two men were but one distant, rather vague and transcendental luminary — a binary star, shining with a single and dubious lustre. But no sooner was the glass of direct scrutiny turned upon them as they rose simultaneously in the American volume than the two stars flew apart — the Spencer orb constantly waxing in real and enduring splendor; while, if Mr. Frederic Harrison is a star at all, it is a dog-star.

Following closely upon a discovery of the value of the book came the knowledge of its suppression. At first it was but an unimportant item of newspaper gossip. Personal interest revealed it as a momentous fact and a calamity. The story as told in the Lon-

don journals adds another shade to Mr. Harrison's ignominy and another ray to Mr. Spencer's glory.

In the unjustifiable and indefensible absence of international law in the matter, any publisher in America can republish the works of any English author, in such style as he chooses, without reference or remuneration to the author. Mr. Frederic Harrison, hearing that such a reprint was made of his and of Mr. Spencer's articles, addressed Mr. Spencer on the subject, to which Mr. Spencer made answer: —

38 QUEEN'S GARDENS, BAYSWATER, W., May 27, 1885.

DEAR SIR, — Here are my replies to the questions put in your note of yesterday.

Just before the middle of January I received from my American friend, Professor Youmans, a letter dated January 2, containing, among others, the following paragraphs: —

'And now we have something of a new embarrassment upon which I must consult you. There is a pretty sharp demand for the publication of your controversy with Harrison in a separate form, and the publishers favor it. The question is not simply whether it is desirable, for we cannot control it. There is danger that it will be done by others, and if that should occur it would be construed as a triumph of the Harrison party — the Spencerians having declined to go into it.

'If I thought no one else would print the correspondence (*i. e.*, the *Nineteenth Century* articles), I should be in favor of our not doing it. In the first place, for general effect, rhetoric against reason counts as about ten to one. The Comtists are reviving — Harrison is coming over to lecture in this country, and much will be made of his brilliant conduct of the controversy. In the next place he has this advantage of you: Your main work bearing upon the issue is to be sought elsewhere, while Harrison had accumulated all the materials of his assault and gives his whole case, so that the popular effect could not fail to be much in his favor. To the narrower circle of readers who can really appreciate the discussion, the republication would undoubtedly be an excellent thing,

and I suppose after all it is only these that we should much care for. On the whole, it may be politic to reprint. What do you think about it?'

There was thus raised a quite unexpected problem. I had supposed that the matter had ended with your letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*; and having expressed (in the *Nineteenth Century*) my intention not to continue the controversy, I hoped it would drop. Here, however, came the prospect of a revival in another shape; and I had to choose between republication by my American friends, or republication by your friends, with the implication that I was averse to it. Though I should have preferred passivity, yet, under the circumstances stated, I thought it best to assent to republication. One objection, however, became manifest. While in my replies to you I had pointed out sundry of your many misrepresentations, I passed over others — one reason being that I could not trespass too much on the space of the *Nineteenth Century* and the attention of its readers. Now, however, when it was proposed that the statements contained in your articles should be re-diffused, and take a permanent form instead of a temporary form, I felt that I could not leave unnoticed these other misrepresentations. Appearing in a volume issued by my American publishers, and edited by my American friend, the implication would have been that statements made by you to which no objection was raised were correct statements. If words in quotation marks tacitly ascribed by you to me had not been disowned by me (p. 100), it would, of course, have been assumed that I had used them, and that I stood convicted of the absurdity which you allege on the assumption that I had used them. If it had not been shown that an opinion you debit me with (p. 118) is wholly at variance with opinions which I have expressed in three different places, it would naturally have been concluded that I held the opinion. Hence it was clear that unless I was to authorize the stereotyping of these and other errors I must take measures to dissipate them. I therefore pointed out to Professor Youmans the statements which required notice, indicated the needful rectifications, and requested him to append these rectifications in his own way. At the same time I forwarded him a copy of the letter which you published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, saying that 'if this reprint of the articles is published without this letter, he (you) will inevitably say that his final reply has been omitted. It is needful, therefore, that it

should be included.' And along with your letter I sent indications of the points in it which should be noticed.

Do you think I was not justified in this course? Do you think I ought to have withheld my consent to the republication by my friends, leaving your friends to republish? Do you think that, having assented to republication, I ought to have let pass without correction your misstatements previously uncorrected? If you think either of these things, I imagine that few will agree with you. There is, however, an easy way of bringing the question to issue. All the articles are copyright in England, and can not be republished here without the consent of all concerned. I do not suppose that Mr. Knowles will raise any difficulty; and if you agree to the re-issue of them here, I am quite willing that they should be re-issued. If you think that anything said in refutation of your statements should not have been said, we can easily include an appendix in which you can point out this; and then, if you wish it, copies of the volume can be sent round to the press.

Of course I preserve a copy of this letter with a view to possible future use.

This letter was sent privately to Mr. Harrison, who replied to it publicly in the *London Times* the next day, May 28, 1885.

DEAR MR. SPENCER, — I cannot admit that there is anything to justify you in being a party to the American reprint of articles of mine, without my knowledge or consent. I learn accidentally that a volume has appeared in New York, which consists of three recent articles of yours in the *Nineteenth Century*, printed alternately with three recent articles of mine, with an introduction, notes, and appendix. This re-issue of my articles was made without the knowledge of myself, or of the proprietor of the *Nineteenth Century*, and he tells me that it is a case of piracy.

You now avow (in your letter to me of yesterday) that the volume was issued by your American publishers, and was edited by your friend, Professor Youmans, after consultation with you, with your consent and assistance. You also avow that you furnished the editor with controversial comments on my articles, and requested him to append them in his own way — that is to say, you have abetted a clandestine reprint of three articles of mine, inter-

polated with notes supplied by yourself. I regard this, not only as an act of literary piracy, but as a new and most unworthy form of literary piracy. May I ask if it is proposed to hand you the profits of a book of which I am (in part) the author, or are these to be retained by your American publishers and friend?

To justify this act you now write that you expected republication in America by my friends. This expectation rests, I can assure you, on a pure invention. No friend of mine, nor any person whatever in America or in England, has ever suggested to me the republication of my articles, nor have I ever heard or thought of such a project. You quote to me, as your authority, a letter from Professor Youmans, who simply says there is danger of its being done by others, and he adds that I am coming to lecture in America. Again, this is a pure invention. I have never thought of lecturing in America, or of going there, nor has any one on either side of the Atlantic suggested to me to do so. Those who 'convey' my writings will as readily invent my intentions. Inquiry would have shown that neither I nor my friends had any intention of reprinting any articles — much less yours. And I fail to see how an unverified report that they might be reprinted, coupled with an unverified report that I was going to lecture in America, could justify you in promoting and assisting in the unauthorized issue and sale of writings of mine.

This is not a simple case of clandestine reprint. Those of us who do not take elaborate precautions are exposed to have what they write appearing in unauthorized American editions. But it does surprise me that an English writer should connive at this treatment of another English writer, with whom he had been carrying on an honorable discussion. It is, I think, something new, even in American piracy, to re-issue an author's writings behind his back, and sell them interlarded with hostile comment. Reprints, even while they plunder us, spare us the sight of our sentences broken on the same page with such amenities as 'he complacently assumes,' 'loose and misleading statements,' etc. You avow, in your letter of yesterday, that you supplied these comments to my articles; and if internal evidence did not show them to be yours, by your offer to me to republish them now in England you treat them as yours. I know no instance of such a practice. It is as if I were piratically to reprint your 'Data of Ethics,' freely interspersed with a running commentary on your practice of ethics,

and were to justify my act on the ground that I had had a controversy with you, and that I had heard your friends were about to reprint it.

There is one minor point which serves to show the kind of publication in which you have chosen to take part. My articles in this volume are followed by a cutting from a newspaper account of what the editor calls 'The Little Bethel of the Comtists.' As the volume bears as its sub-title the words, 'A Controversy between Frederic Harrison and Herbert Spencer,' that newspaper paragraph would only be relevant if it referred to practices in which I had some part, or which I approved. It is well known that I have nothing to do with anything of the kind, and never countenanced it. Nothing of the sort has ever been heard in Newton Hall, where for years past I have presented Posivitism as I understand it. The matter is a small bit of polemical mischief; those who are engaged in plunder are not likely to be fair. But I think it is quite unworthy of a place in a volume for which you are responsible, and which you have authorized and adopt.

You now propose to me to republish this volume in England, where you admit it could not appear without the consent of all concerned. After what you have done, I must decline to act with you. I leave your conduct to the judgment of men of sense and of honor.

Thereupon Mr. Spencer printed in the *Times* his own letter which had evoked this reply, adding to it the comments: —

Mr. Harrison had this letter before him when he wrote his statement. Does the reader find that his statement produced an impression anything like that which my letter produces? The other comment is this: Asking whether I have any share in the profits, Mr. Harrison not only by this, but by his title, 'A New Form of Literary Piracy,' tacitly suggests that I have. Merely stating that the affair is purely the affair of the Messrs. Appleton, and that not even a thought about money ever entered my head concerning it, I draw attention to the readiness with which Mr. Harrison, without a particle of evidence, makes grave insinuations. And I do this because it will enable the reader to judge what need there probably

was for taking the measures I did to prevent the wider and more permanent diffusion of Mr. Harrison's misrepresentations.

Concerning the newspaper extract describing a Comtist service I know nothing, and greatly regret that it was appended. I will at once ask to have it withdrawn. If three gentlemen, appointed in the usual way, decide that under the circumstances, as stated to me by Professor Youmans, I was not justified in the course I took, I will, if Mr. Harrison wishes it, request Messrs. Appleton to suppress the book and destroy the stereotype plates, and I will make good their loss to them.

The correspondence was continued in the *Times*, June 2.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, —I will not pursue this matter further, nor will I insist on Mr. Spencer's fair offer to submit it to arbitration. It satisfies me if he will not claim any absolute and moral right to copyright in America my writings with rectifications of his own. I am accustomed to unauthorized reprints of what I write; and as I hear there is a brisk sale for these essays (*quorum pars minima fui*) I will only congratulate the Yankee editor on his 'cuteness. As Mr. Spencer, by his offer, now admits it to be possible that he made a mistake, I am ready to regard his share of it as an inadvertence. I know too well his great generosity in money matters to suppose that any question of profit crossed his mind. But it certainly crossed some one's mind; and I referred to it only to convince him that eager partisans had led him into a mistake. It is not easy at any time to get him to see this, and to open his eyes I used for once plain words. Conscious that I had conducted a philosophical debate with an old friend with all the deference and admiration that I really feel for his genius, it did pain me to find myself treated as the proverbial dog whom any stick is good enough to beat. The only arbitration I now desire is that of some common friend who may convince him that I wish nothing more than a return to the position of philosophic friends who agree to differ about their respective systems.

I am, etc.,

FREDERIC HARRISON.

June 1.

[*Times, June 3.*]

MR. SPENCER AND MR. HARRISON.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, — Rather than have any further question with Mr. Harrison, and rather than have it supposed that I intentionally ignored his copyright claim, I have telegraphed to Messrs. Appleton to stop the sale, destroy the stock and plates, and debit me with their loss.

I am faithfully yours,

Clovelly, June 2. HERBERT SPENCER.

[*Times, June 4.*]

MR. SPENCER AND MR. HARRISON.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, — Allow me to supplement my letter telegraphed yesterday, partly to explain how the thing arose, and partly to correct an impression made by your leader of to-day. I was wrong in assenting to the republication by Messrs. Appleton. I ought to have borne passively the threatened evils of republication by other publishers, and, as my friend has been connected with publishing in New York for thirty years, I supposed his impression that these were coming was correct. But my decision was made in a hurry, without due thought. Believing there was no time to lose, I telegraphed reply, and by the next post indicated corrections to be made in the statements of my views. And here I wish to point out that the notes I indicated were not criticism of Mr. Harrison's opinions, but corrected versions of my own. Any others, if there are any, are Professor Youmans'. I go on to explain that my mind was so engrossed with the due presentation of the controversy that the question of copyright never occurred to me; and the thought that Mr. Harrison might not like his articles republished was excluded by the impression given me that others would republish them if the Appletons did not. Hence my error. But my error does not, I think, excuse Mr. Harrison's insult. By cancelling the rest of the edition and the plates I have done all that remains possible to rectify the effects of my mistake.

I am faithfully yours,

Ilfracombe, June 3. HERBERT SPENCER.

[*Times, June 6.*]

MR. HARRISON AND MR. SPENCER.

To the Editor of the Times.

SIR, — May I once more trespass on your space by asking you to publish the following letter from Mr. Harrison?

I am faithfully yours, HERBERT SPENCER.

38 WESTBOURNE-TERRACE, W., June 4, 1885.

DEAR MR. SPENCER, — As you still appear to think (in spite of my public disclaimer) that I have brought against you a charge of desiring money profit out of this American reprint, I beg to say that I did not intend to make any such charge, and I do not believe that I have. I regret the use of any words which produced that impression on you. I am yours faithfully,

FREDERIC HARRISON.

P. S. — You can use this letter as you think fit.

HERBERT SPENCER, Esq.

[*Standard, June 10.*]

MR. SPENCER AND MR. HARRISON.

To the Editor of the Standard.

SIR, — The fact that the information to which it refers came through *The Standard* must be my excuse for asking you to publish the following letter, a copy of which I have inclosed to Mr. Harrison, requesting him to post it after reading it.

I am, sir, your obedient servant, HERBERT SPENCER.

38 QUEEN'S-GARDENS, BAYSWATER, LONDON, W., June 9.

MY DEAR YOUMANS, — I returned home last night, and only this morning learned that in *The Standard* of Saturday last there was, in a telegram from New York, a statement to the effect that Messrs. Appleton declined to destroy the stock and plates of the reprinted controversy (as I had telegraphed them to do), on the score that the book would be reprinted by some other publisher. In this expectation they are probably right. But a reprint would necessarily be without the notes: since these, as implied in your preface, are your copyright in America. Now, though these notes — or, at least, those which I pointed out as needful — are corrections of erroneous statements of my views, yet, rather than have it supposed that I wished to take any advantage of Mr. Harrison in

making such corrections, I will submit to the evil of re-issue by another publisher without them; and I therefore repeat my request that the stock and stereo-plates may be destroyed, and the loss debited to me.

One word respecting the proposal of the Appletons to share the author's profits between Mr. Harrison and myself. If any have at present accrued, or if, in consequence of refusal to do as I have above requested, any should hereafter accrue, then I wish to say that having been, and being now, absolutely indifferent to profit in the matter, I shall decline to accept any portion of the returns.

Ever sincerely yours, HERBERT SPENCER.

It will readily be seen by every one who has read the preceding essays that the inevitable stamp of character —Frederic Harrison, his mark— is placed on his letters as indelibly and vividly as on his essays, and that his way as a correspondent is exactly like his way as a controvertist. The scholar and philosopher of whose personal friendship he had more than once boasted, he thinks it seemly to characterize as a particularly depraved pirate. This 'philosophic friend' is of such an eight-days-old-kittenish blindness that in order to pry open his eyes, a 'philosophic friend' is obliged to resort to the sharp nomenclature of the Billingsgate. This he terms 'using for once plain words.' In America we do not call it by that name, and we should expect any person above the rank of fishwomen to let Mr. Spencer wander to his life's end with closed eyes rather than open them by such an operation.

'I know too well his great generosity in money matters to suppose that any question of profit crossed his mind;' why then did Mr. Harrison commit the

indescribable vulgarity of asking 'if it is proposed to hand you the profits?' Calmly, without wincing, Mr. Harrison demonstrates that he publicly launched a coarse innuendo, an insinuation of dishonesty, a sneer of greed, at his friend, knowing that it was absolutely baseless, and seeming not to know that it was absolutely base. Even when Mr. Spencer, much enforced, did show a hasty and precious spark of resentment, Mr. Harrison could not understand it. He regrets that calling a man a pirate, a novel and most unworthy pirate, enriching himself with other people's property, should 'produce an impression' other than friendly and philosophical.

Mr. Spencer bears himself throughout like what he must be, a gentleman, a philosopher, and a Christian. He may not call himself a Christian. I do not know whether he calls himself a Christian, but he must submit to an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven on the password of the 'Inasmuch.' At the first note of discontent from Mr. Harrison he proposed an amicable and fair adjustment by joint republication in England, with entire freedom of comment to Mr. Harrison, -- which Mr. Harrison sternly declined. Mr. Spencer was too great a villain for Mr. Harrison to have any dealings with. 'After what you have done, I must decline to act with you. I leave your conduct to the judgment of men of sense and of honor.'

It would seem as if the fatuity, the sublimity of insolence could no further go. Mr. Spencer would have been justified in paying no more attention to

Mr. Harrison's state of mind; but, bent on justice, he overlooked manners, and again proffered redress, in the shape of arbitration. This also Mr. Harrison declined, but less sternly. The tide of virtue had ebbed. Mr. Spencer had ceased to be too much of a pirate for a business partner, and had suddenly lapsed into a desirable personal friend. Mr. Harrison had discovered that all he wanted now was to be 'philosophic friends' with Mr. Spencer. Mr. Spencer was surely justified in praying vengeance to take any shape but that. No wonder that with such a contingency confronting him he summarily telegraphed to America to stop the sale of the book and destroy the stock and plates!

Here, it seems to me, the duties of Mr. Spencer and the rights of Mr. Harrison regarding the book ended. Our lack of international copyright, barbarously iniquitous as it is, is still a fact, and has to be considered. Mr. Spencer, by cancelling his own share in the publication, had done all that he could do to appease Mr. Harrison. In the offer to submit to arbitration, in the offer to republish jointly with Mr. Harrison in England, in the submission of the American publishers to Mr. Spencer's suppression of the book, and in the habit of the American publishers to pay foreign authors the same rates as American authors, the spirit of international copyright law was observed. It must be supposed, it may be assumed, that when a man publishes anything he wishes it to be public — to be as widely spread as possible. It may be legitimately assumed that he does not wish

it to be hidden in a corner of the world, published in one little angle of the universe and hushed up in the open area. Mr. Harrison's complaint that the book was published with notes hostile to himself is childish. All the notes were in correction of Mr. Harrison's misrepresentations, not in refutation of Mr. Harrison's arguments. It is but further illustrative of Mr. Harrison's methods that, instead of apologizing to Mr. Spencer for making these misrepresentations, he attacks him with a bludgeon for correcting them. But any grievance which Mr. Harrison may have supposed himself to suffer would be entirely redressed by publication in England with whatever explanations and protestations he chose to accompany it.

The situation, however, could be nothing bettered, but rather made worse, by an American re-issue without co-operation or consultation with either of the authors, or any warning notes. Such a re-issue, contemplated no doubt with the best intentions on the part of the American publishers, seemed an ingenious combination of everything that ought not to be done. It might indeed not include Mr. Spencer in the iniquity of 'piracy,' but it did him the very wrong — of disseminating uncontradicted, false views of his theory, and false rendering and false quotations of his words — which he had committed 'piracy' to prevent, and which had already deceived the very elect, as witness Mr. Wilfrid Ward and the *Spectator*. It was redressing, or not repeating, for Mr. Frederic Harrison the grievance of

the notes, but it was not redressing but rather renewing for him the grievance of republication without his consent. A feeble private protest could have no other effect, naturally, than to satisfy one's own conscience; but when I found that the book was seriously threatened in all its naked malfeasance, I picked out instantly my few small, smooth stones from the brook, to let fly at the foe, while waiting for some better champion to gird on his too laggard sword. My pebbles may not hit Goliath, much less fell him, but it will not be because they are not slung with a hearty good-will; and in such a cause as this—

> 'Tis better to have fought and lost,
> Than never to have fought at all.'

If Mr. Harrison has any curiosity as to the persons to whom the profits of this book are to accrue, I cheerfully answer, to myself. It is true the publishers frankly avow at the outset that there will probably be no profits, and that the publication at this time and in this manner promises to be the sacrifice of all prospective gain. Fortunately, one can not only cultivate literature on a little oatmeal, but oatmeal buttered, sugared, and eaten smoking hot is a delicious viand, not to say a wholesome aliment; wherefore that is no sacrifice. But if, on the other hand, the book glistens with Golcondan treasure, as it is well to assure one's publishers, not so much perhaps from conviction as to give them something to live up to, let me persuade Mr. Harrison beyond doubt that I shall unhesitatingly appropriate it all. By his wan-

ton sneers at Mr. Spencer's honor, by his churlish refusal to accept Mr. Spencer's conciliatory proffers, by his ignorant inability to recognize any claims which thought has upon its votaries, he has forfeited all moral rights which we are bound to respect; and legal rights he had none to begin with. He stands before the American public as a man who was willing to stab his friend, but demanded as his standard of honor that his friend should lie still and be stabbed without making any ado about it. The only punishment, it appears, which he can be made to feel is to see 'the profits' pouring into other hands than his own. In view of this, if the ''cute Yankee' Publishers issue occasional bulletins of 'Fifteen Thousand called for,' 'Fiftieth Thousand now ready,' 'Hundred and Seventieth Thousand will be issued early next week,' a judicious public will perhaps refrain from too close a scutiny of the figures upon which these announcements are based! I have but one word of quarrel with the ''cute Yankee' Editor of the American Reprint, who has vigorously and amply presented his case, and who remarks, with melancholy humor, that, in spite of Mr. Harrison's satirical congratulations on his sharp practice, he was to be 'the only party to get nothing. Among the several stools occupied by authors and publishers, it was his fate to sit on the ground.' The only thing for which he deserves this abrupt adoption of lowly posture is for speaking of Mr. Harrison's 'brilliant conduct of the controversy.' It is a misuse of terms to call this reckless pitchforking of words from one heap to another a

'conduct of a controversy.' A dancing dervish might as well be complimented on his brilliant conduct of a Columbian voyage of discovery. The dancing dervish is more nimble than Columbus, but he gets nowhere and discovers nothing. The ''cute Yankee' was much nearer to scientific accuracy, Positive Philosophy and elegant literature, as well as to popular appreciation, in the private remark — which he will never forgive me for reproducing — in which his honest indignation characterized the 'brilliant Positivist' as 'that blackguard who is founding a new religion.'

To those who sometimes contemplate with misgiving the acrimony of our political contests, Mr. Harrison's mendacious and audacious performances may even minister comfort. They show at least that the violence and slander of an electoral campaign are not the local inflammation of republican institutions, to be treated only by weakening those institutions; but are an hereditory scrofula in the blood, common to the English University man of letters and to the over-worked and under-taught American editor; more flagrant on the serene heights of Philosophy than down in the arena where men are wrestling strenuously and openly for the great political prizes; but always and everywhere to be checked and removed only by a toning up of the whole system, a constant rejuvenation and development of the man as distinguished from the brute.

Will it be considered presumptuous in me to beg Mr. Herbert Spencer henceforth to eschew contro-

versy? There are hosts of readers who can take care of Mr. Frederic Harrison and his kind, and who would be doing nothing more worth, if we were not doing that. But Mr. Spencer has other and better worlds to conquer, for which our weapons are all untempered, our powers all inadequate. To that loftier and tranquil work we pray him to devote his whole heart and soul and mind and strength.